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EDITORIAL



SOMETIMES YOU have to step outside your comfort zone and take a gamble to discover a whole new world of opportunities. That is certainly the experience of Chris and Pat Shurlock, who decided in 2001 that life was short and splashed out on a brand new MGF 1.6. At the time they knew very little about MGs and next to nothing about the MGF, but the little red sportster has since become a huge part of their lives, opening doors to a social life they would otherwise never have had. You can read all about that from p28.

This theme of taking a chance and jumping into the unknown will be familiar to a lot of owners, and never is it more starkly illustrated than when setting out on a restoration. Take the NA Magnette on p42, a car that was restored by two friends, Howard Braithwaite and John Benton. Tackling a car of this vintage was unknown territory for John at least, but I can only imagine the pride he must feel in the finished article and the pleasure from knowing how much it is admired by all who see it.

Or how about James Kasper's MGB GT on p36? James did a fair amount of research before deciding on an MGB, then took his time to search out what appeared to be a suitable restoration candidate. As inevitably happens, the restoration showed up rather more in the way of work than initially appeared to be the case, but James took it all with the right attitude and persevered to create a gorgeous car. Now he is looking forward to the spring when he can get out with his MG and join a few local classic car or British car runs. None of that would have been possible if he had not taken the plunge and started his restoration.

Of course, not everybody has the time, money or inclination to undertake a restoration, but Chris and Pat have shown that this need be no barrier to a world of social opportunity. So if you have an MG that rarely gets used, blow off the dust and make a point of getting out and about in 2015. The FBHVC's Drive It Day on 26 April would be an ideal starting point, but there are events happening virtually every weekend of the year. And if you haven't got an MG yet, tag along to some local club events. You'll be made very welcome, and no doubt given the push you need to take that plunge.

Simon Goldsworthy
Editor

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Jack Goff to drive for MG

MG have named their second driver for the 2015 BTCC campaign, and he is a racer with real MG pedigree.

MG have announced that their second driver in the BTCC during 2015 will be Jack Goff. Not only is he an MG man – he's owned seven of them apparently, and started out racing with a ZR in the MG Trophy championship – he also showed plenty of skill and determination in the BTCC last year to finish 15th in the championship. With ten top ten finishes including an eighth spot in the closing race of the year at Brands Hatch, he should be a good wing man for Andrew Jordan.

Triple Eight Racing's Managing Director, Ian Harrison, thinks that the 2015 driver line-up is the perfect combination of young talent coupled with racing experience and enthusiasm. He said: 'Jack sitting alongside Andrew ticks all the right boxes for MG and the team. We plan to continue to win races, take podiums and lock out front rows so that the MG Triple Eight Racing MG6s dominate the grid. Everybody remembers the 2013 last round at Brands where Jack went wheel-to-wheel with Gordon Shedden, and we need him to

try to replicate that for us on a regular basis.'

The MGCC said: 'The news that former MG Trophy racer Jack Goff has signed as a Works driver for MG this season shows once again that racing with the MG Car Club is a proven route into the world of professional motor racing. Jack finds himself in good company, as the latest in a long line of racers who began their career with the MG Car Club before moving on to wider success not only in the British Touring Car Championship, but also in the World Touring Car Championship. Drivers like Robb Gravett who won the club's BCV8 Championship in 1986 and the BTCC in 1990, or Paul O'Neill who began his career at the wheel of an MGF in the MGF Cup before going on to podium success and a place as a fan favourite in the BTCC. MG fans will also remember Fiona Leggate, who progressed from MG Trophy to compete in the BTCC at the wheel of the Team Kartworld MG ZS in 2007.

'Another driver schooled with the MGCC is former World



Touring Car Champion Rob Huff. Huff's formative racing years were spent in the BCV8 championship before progressing to the BTCC and later the WTCC where he won the title for Chevrolet in 2012.

'It's possible to compete with the MG Car Club in an MG Metro for as little £4000 – probably the cheapest way into motor racing in the UK – while a race-ready MG ZR can be

bought for just £3000, with a season costing around £4000.'

If you'd like to know more about the club's motorsport programme, visit their website at www.mgcc.co.uk/motorsport or contact the club's Competitions Secretary John Hutchison by calling 01235 849738.

The 2015 BTCC season starts on 4-5 April at Brands Hatch – see www.btcc.net



MG GS London ad filmed

Benedict Cumberbatch has been seen filming an MG GS SUV advert in London. He was spotted at Greenwich and by Tower Bridge, and David Knowles has also turned up this image of the Sherlock Holmes actor being used in China to emphasise the Britishness of the new SUV.

FBHVC insurance discount

Classic clubs and members associated with the Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs can now benefit from an exclusive insurance package and discounted premiums thanks to Stewart Miller & Peter James Insurance. Stewart Miller Insurance can also now offer FBHVC-affiliated clubs an innovative new facility especially for trade members. The new Commercial Legal Expenses Insurance package has been tailored to meet the needs of clubs including Personal Injury, Tax Protection, Property Protection, Employment Disputes & Compensation Awards, Legal Defence, Statutory Legal Protection, Debt Recovery, Contract Disputes (Full limit of Indemnity), Tenancy Disputes (as a tenant), Helplines for Legal Advice, Tax Counselling and Business Website.

The benefits are in addition to Peter James Insurance's Young Drivers scheme, open to all members of recognised classic vehicle clubs and offering competitive premiums for full UK driver licence holders from the age of 17, whose car is more than 30 years old and is their sole mode of transport.

FBHVC members wishing to take advantage of a discounted premium should quote their club membership details when renewing or purchasing insurance, and young enthusiasts qualifying for the Young Drivers Scheme can call 0121 506 6040 to discuss their individual needs.

Two new MG dealers

MG has announced the appointment of two new dealerships so far in 2015, one at Telford in Shropshire and the other in Taunton, Somerset. First was Telford MG, part of the Budgen Motor Group family-owned business which goes back almost 40 years. Their new 180m² purpose-built showrooms are on Stafford Park 1 and include a five-bay workshop. The business also runs an MG After Sales workshop in Featherbed Lane, Shrewsbury with a further 14 bays. In total the firm employs 75 people.

K&R MG in Taunton has also opened its doors for business. Headed by former MG 6R4 Group B rally driver Karl Broad, the new dealership will cover a wide area of Somerset from its eight-car showroom on Cook Way, Bindon Road. Karl has invested heavily in his state-of-the-art workshops, and the large K&R site gives the company plenty of space to look at further expansion of the MG business in the future.



1974 cars tax free

In 2014 the Chancellor of the Exchequer introduced a 40-year rolling exemption from Vehicle Excise Duty. Every year on 1 April (the start of the new tax year), the cut-off date for tax exemption moves forward a year. This benefit applies to any vehicle manufactured before 1 January of the qualifying year, regardless of when it was registered. So, on 1 April 2015, any car built prior to 1 January 1975 will be eligible for exemption.

However car owners will not get this benefit automatically. It is up to them to apply to the DVLA to change the taxation classification of their vehicle from 'Private Light Goods' to 'Historic'. Only once this has been done will the car be exempt from Vehicle Excise Duty. The Heritage Certificate, which is a certified copy of a vehicle's factory record, can help as it is accepted by the DVLA as proof of the date of manufacture. The Certificates are carefully prepared by staff at the Heritage Motor Centre's Archive Department who research the original build ledgers to provide the exact details of an individual car as it left the production line. To apply for a Heritage Certificate and get full details of all the documents on offer, visit www.heritage-motor-centre.co.uk/archive-services



Impossible to miss on the Triple-M Register stand was this NA Bellevue Monoposto. It is currently for sale by Tom Hardman Ltd - price on application only!

International MG & Triumph Spares Day

The formerly separate MG and Triumph shows had been united in a single event in 2014, and this format was repeated for 2015 on Sunday 1 March. The changes necessary to merge the two shows are still not popular in all quarters, but it certainly seems to be a winning formula with visitors – 2014 had seen a record attendance, and this jumped an astonishing 22% this year as 12,996 visitors made the pilgrimage to Stoneleigh. That very success did create serious problems with access however, and many visitors faced unacceptable delays getting into the site as roads became clogged in all directions and traffic ground to a standstill. The organisers acknowledged this and said: 'Unfortunately the system did not cope with the unprecedented increase in visitors. Whilst this didn't affect all visitors, it certainly affected some and we would like to formally apologise for any delays experienced. We have already reviewed traffic plans with the venue for 2016, and are confident that by opening multiple gates simultaneously we will not encounter any further problems with the event continuing to grow as it has done over the last two years.'

On a more positive note, when visitors got into the show they were able to enjoy three well-stocked halls heaving with new parts, secondhand items, tools, garage consumables and more. And when they were done shopping, there were plenty of rare, unusual and interesting cars to admire on the club stands.

Next year's event will be on 21 February, 2016.



Many big name suppliers such as David Manners had well-stocked stands, enabling visitors to make the most of low prices without having to add postage.



Fighting prostate cancer

Lancaster Insurance has announced that it will be headline sponsor of the MG Owner's Club (MGOC) Race Championship in 2015, and also that it has partnered with Prostate Cancer UK to increase understanding and recognition of the disease.

The Championship begins on 11 April at Rockingham, and continues until early October with eight rounds of great competitive racing on offer at all the major UK race circuits. Aside from the racing, a key element of Lancaster's involvement will be raising funds and awareness of prostate cancer amongst racers, spectators and their families. There will be a chance to donate at each race meet, and volunteers will also be on hand to provide information about a disease which kills one man every hour.

Lancaster Insurance will also be entering its own driver, Martin Wills, into the championship. Martin is a keen racer and no stranger to the MGOC – he started racing an MGF in 2004 and won the Championship in 2010. The MGOC Race Championship is now in its 35th successful season with over

60 drivers competing in five classes. For more information, visit www.mgoc-championship.co.uk

Lancaster Insurance has also announced that it will be attempting to set a Guinness World Record title for the Largest Parade of MGs with the help of the MG Owners' Club at that opening race meeting on Saturday 11 April at Rockingham Circuit in Corby, Northamptonshire. The attempt will take place on the Oval Track, the UK's only banked Oval and Europe's fastest motor racing circuit, after the first MGOC Race Championship event has finished.

An official Guinness World Records adjudicator will be in attendance, overseeing the attempt and confirming on the day if a new record has been set. Lancaster will then be capping off the tremendous occasion by holding a free traditional hog roast for all participants to enjoy. To achieve the Guinness World Records title, there must be more than 100 cars in the parade. For further information see www.lancasterinsurance.co.uk/gwr

New man at the Hoyle helm



Hoyle Suspension, creators of independent suspensions for classic MGs, have new owners after John Hoyle retired – the suspensions he designed will now be provided by Mark Wanstall of MG specialist Fisher Services. Fisher Services built their reputation on exquisite concours restorations, and now offer a full range of services from repair and restoration to modification and parts (in fact Mark reckons they could build you a brand new MG from parts alone!), so the addition of Hoyle Suspension to their portfolio is a logical step. The change will be seamless for customers, with the products carrying on unchanged and manufactured to the same high standards by the same craftsmen.

The Hoyle suspensions are available for the front and rear of the MGA, MGB and MGB V8, and for the rear of the MGC and RV8. Fisher Services are located at Unit 11, Abbey Trading Estate, Bell Green Lane, Lower Sydenham, London SE26 5TW. Call 020 8776 7695 or see www.fisher-services.co.uk

FJ and the CTM

Footman James is now offering specialist insurance rates to friends of Coventry Transport Museum. The scheme includes special rates, and gives owners the opportunity to tailor their policy through FJ+ where options include agreed value, breakdown, spare parts, track day and travelling to work cover. Gary Hall of the CTM said: 'We are really pleased to be entering into this partnership with Footman James in 2015, which is set to be a very special year for the museum. This summer we will relaunch the attraction following an impressive £9m redevelopment project, which is guaranteed to bring classic transport enthusiasts from around the world to enjoy our unique collection.' For further information about Footman James contact 0333 207 6000 or visit www.footmanjames.co.uk. For information on the Coventry Transport Museum, see www.transport-museum.com

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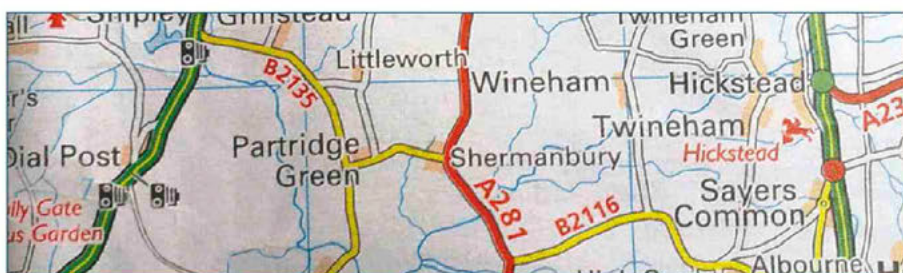
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Race Retro draws 30,000

Race Retro has become the must-attend venue for anyone interested in historic motorsport these days, and 30,000 enthusiasts visited the Stoneleigh Showground in February. These days historic motorsport is all-embracing, and while racing and rallying at classic level is now very high profile, just about every discipline has a historic sector. One that is really blooming is historic trials, who had a display of 1950s and 1960s cars.

The MG Car Club stand was as usual positioned near the main entrance, and there was a constant flow of racers and would be racers over all three days. The stand featured Olly Neave's superbly presented MGB V8, which he races in the club's BCV8 Championship. The team behind the Equipe GTS series for pre-1966 FIA cars were busy recruiting all weekend and reported nearly 100 registrations - which could make for some over subscribed grids if they all turn up for the same meetings!

The other MG in the main hall was in fact a regular in the GTS races, the British Motor Heritage MGB of John Yea on the BMH stand. This is the ultimate historic B, incorporating all the replacement and remanufactured parts from that firm and finished in a striking dark blue. Other

clubs that were keen to see MGs racing with them were the Historic Sports Car Club who were offering their 1970s Road Sports Championship, the 750 MC with their Road Sports and Bernie's V8 races, and the Classic Sports Car Club with their Swinging Sixties series.

Outside in the cold, the rally stage proved very popular with cars from a 40 year period entertaining the large crowd. Top drivers like Jimmy McRae, Dai Llewellyn and Russell Brooks were joined by special guest Ari Vatanen. They all drove a variety of the cars over the four sessions, with MG being represented by the Metro 6R4.

Silverstone Auctions ran the main auction on the Saturday, which sadly had no public access as has been permitted in the past. A very tidy 1968 MGC went for £18,000 which was above the top estimate, and a 1960 MGA with past race and rally use sold for £20,250.

All in all a very good event, although many enthusiasts feel the organisers need to up their game to keep people coming back. Over the last few years the number of trade and club stands has declined, while some of the advertised 'special displays' have ended up being less than special... **Graeme Forrester**

Learn to AutoTest

Autotesting is driving a course of cones against the clock. Autosolos are the same as autotesting, but the course is only driving forwards. There are two objectives when undertaking this form of driving test - firstly, to drive the course correctly and secondly to drive it as quickly as you can without incurring penalties. If you have never tried this form of motorsport, then the Lincolnshire Centre of the MGCC are holding a practice day at East Kirkby on April 12 where experienced hands will show you how it is done. The event is open to all, irrespective of whether you are a member of the MGCC or not. Entry forms are on their website at www.mgcclincolnshire.co.uk



The MGB GT at 50

The MG Car Club's MGB Register are planning a gathering/picnic at the historic Shelsley Walsh hillclimb venue on 16 August to celebrate 50 years since the launch of the MGB GT. Shelsley Walsh is easy to get to, being located near Worcester and the M5 at junction 6. Full details and an entry form are now available from the Events page of the MGB Register website: www.mgb-register.org/MGB-Register/Events.html Entry is possible on the day, but there are advantages to be had by pre-booking your tickets.

MGCC's great escape

The MG Car Club has welcomed Redditch-based Great Escapes Classic Car Hire to their trade membership. The company has a range of MGs on its books, including firm favourites such as the B and F as well as the likes of E-Type Jaguars, Austin-Healeys and Alfa Romeos all available. And to celebrate their trade membership, Great Escapes will offer a 25% discount to any MGCC member looking to book any of the classics from their fleet - something which could well be of interest to overseas members looking to book an MG to attend MGLive! in June. For more information, see www.greatescapecars.co.uk or call 01527 893733.

MG-Rovers rule the roost

Within UK club rallying circles, it is widely acknowledged that the Preston Rally is one of the toughest and most popular rallies that there are. Despite its name, the rally takes place in East Anglia and comprises some 120 miles of private roads and tracks on farmland, disused airfields and forests. The event has been run for the past 36 years by Chelmsford Motor Club and has been sponsored throughout by Prestons Garage of Writtle.

Owen and Jamie Turner, owners of the Rover Centre in St Albans have competed in the Preston for the past 19 years in a variety of cars, but for the last seven years they have used Rover 200s and MG ZRs built to Endurance Rally specification with the 1400cc K-series engine. Initially the cars were the subject of a certain amount

of friendly banter from drivers of other much more powerful vehicles. However, after four outright victories and four second places the banter soon stopped and in this year's entry of 56 cars, no fewer than 15 were either MG ZR or Rover 200/25. Many of these cars were built by (or partially prepared by) the Rover Centre.

In fact the MG ZR is now recognised to be the car to use in many forms of rallying, including endurance rallying where it has dominated the formula for the last eight years thanks in a large part to its inherent strength, nimbleness and handling. Of particular note at the start of this year's Preston Rally was that the organisers had spotted the profusion of yellow ZRs, seven in all (pictured below), and arranged a special enclosure just for them.



Photo: mandh-photography.co.uk

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From an MGF for £550 to an RV8 for £21,280

It was a flying start to the 2015 season for Brightwells, where a record £1.8m of classic merchandise passed in front of the rostrum.

Over 2000 people were counted through the gates at Brightwells on 4 March, apparently plus a few more who arrived by helicopter – not a bad way of out-psychoing the opposition! It's doubtful that the chopper squad presence affected values of the 17 MGs on offer – there was nothing in the hen's teeth category, so prices were generally affordable. In fact, there were plenty of lots that looked bargains if you don't care about cosmetic perfection. For instance, a 1970 Midget MkIII described as 'quite tatty' but looking reasonable in real life (we're spoiled by so many mint restorations these days) went for £1900 plus commission. Boasting a roll cage, tuned 1275 A-series and fresh MoT, this car could have been used as a daily driver or given a rolling restoration. Either way, it's unlikely you'd ever lose money.

A slightly older Midget also needing a bit of TLC was one of the few No Sales. £2500-£3000 was the estimate, which seemed fair for a car that had had quite a lot of money spent on it, but a bit of bubbling paint and a non-original engine held back bidders.

Those wanting a ready-made car for sprints and hillclimbs could have handed over £3150 for a late Midget 1500 that had already been given the necessary mods. With only two former keepers, it was recommissioned last year after a long lay-off. Possibly not ideal for road use (think noise, rollcage and race seats with full harnesses), but perfect for a painless entry into competition.

The second most expensive Midget on the day was the well-preserved 1965 MkII, at

£5600. Predictably, the partly restored '52 TD went for rather more, a nice round £10,000. With most T-Types going for twice as much, this could have been another bargain for the sort of person who thinks old cars should look old. Having originally been supplied to California, rust wasn't a problem, so who cares about a few dents and scrapes?

£9800 bagged a 1936 SA saloon, unearthed after 30 years of barn rest. The SA wasn't one of MG's best hits. Design work began before the Nuffield takeover, and Abingdon's intention for what was then known as the S-Type (Jaguar obviously remembered and liked the name, if nothing else!) was to create an advanced sports saloon to compete with SS and, possibly, Bentley. Although the project was revived in 1935 when the Morris men arrived, the accent now was on making a profit, so independent rear suspension was ditched and an uprated 2288cc version of the Wolseley Six engine went under the long and luxurious bonnet.

Brightwells knocked down one other saloon, a Magnette ZB that had previously spent time on show at the Llangollen Motor Museum. This example had covered fewer than 10,000 miles since the vendor bought it ten years ago, but was mostly ready to use. A hammer price of £5800 showed that Magnettes have a strong following and aren't likely to depreciate any time soon.

Nor are RV8s, apparently, after a period when some were selling at four-figure prices. The one offered was yet another Japanese re-import and had a typically sketchy history, but



Glorious RV8 made a glorious £21,280 with H&H in Buxton.

still managed to break the £10k barrier. Meanwhile, £4000 more (plus commission, VAT, etc) secured a droptop MGA MkII with a Ford five-speed gearbox hidden under those seductive curves.

Brightwells has in the past hammered down mint MGCs at record prices. The 1968 GT lined up this time wasn't quite so sparkly and made £9000. No doubt a documented mileage record and details of the restoration would have nudged it higher.

A swarm of Bs is expected at any classic auction, so naturally a good selection was available at Leominster. At the concours end of the market, the gavel fell at £10,700 for a stunning '69 GT. Those less interested in originality (much less) could instead have bought a modified B 'Speedster' with Oselli 2-litre engine for about half as much. No-one wanted to pay that in the event, so it seems MG people are too chicken to drive around without a windscreen.

H&H returned to Buxton to hammer down 70 out of 81 lots, an impressive 86% sale rate. The inclusion of a 1989 Austin Maestro might have raised a few eyebrows, but it attracted plenty of interest and sold for £3360. A good result, so let's not forget that MG

versions of this humble hatchback and its Metro/Montego siblings kept the marque alive in the 1980s.

The other car entrusted with this task was, of course, the RV8 that arrived in 1992. Lot 65, registered K2 MGW, was actually the second one off the line and has an extensive history file, which includes its appearance in David Knowles's *MG V8* book. In its 22 year life the car has clocked only 14,000 miles in the hands of its sole owner. How much for an RV8 with this pedigree? £21,280 was the answer, a figure that will probably ensure the car continues to have a cosseted existence.

A pair of TDs made £19,210 and £17,920, the difference being explained by the more expensive one being an ex-California model that had been subject to a £30k restoration.

Considering some recent prices, the 2006 TF135's £4032 result was promising, although a more ordinary (but still very good) example fetched only £1916 at Barons. Even more depressing for those waiting for Fs and TFs to gain value, Richard Edmonds at Castle Combe sold a 1997 example with service history for just £550. They can't get much cheaper than that, surely?



Bidding for barn-find SA reached £9800.



MGB Speedster failed to tempt buyers.



Ex-museum ZB – great value at £5800.

RIMMER BROS



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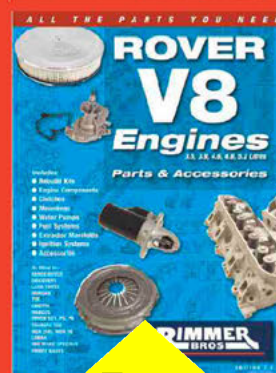
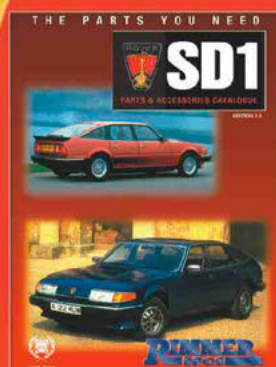
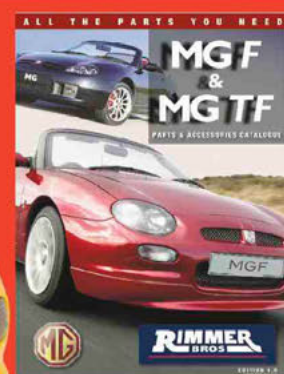
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FOLLOW US



Triumph House, Sleaford Road, Bracebridge Heath,
Lincoln, LN4 2NA, England

MGB polyurethane spring eye bush kit

Price: £14.95

MGOC Spares & Accessories are offering MGB owners a new replacement spring eye bush kit (AHH6446X2), comprising a pair of injection moulded polyurethane spring eye bushes, stainless steel sleeves and polyurethane compatible grease. MGOC Spares & Accessories stock a complete range of competitively priced polyurethane bush kits for MGB, Midget, MGF and MG TF models, transforming the ride and extending service life. To order call MGOC Spares & Accessories on 01954 231318 or visit www.mgocspares.co.uk



Autoglym wheel protector

Price: £9.99

Autoglym have launched Autoglym Wheel Protector, which lasts up to six weeks to repel brake dust and dirt. The technology results in the wheels looking cleaner between washes and being easier to clean and maintain. The formulation makes rain or hose water bead and roll off the surface, taking

dirt particles away with it making this ideal for intricate wheels that are difficult to clean. Available from motor and car care retailers including Halfords, to view this product and the full Autoglym range, visit www.autoglym.com



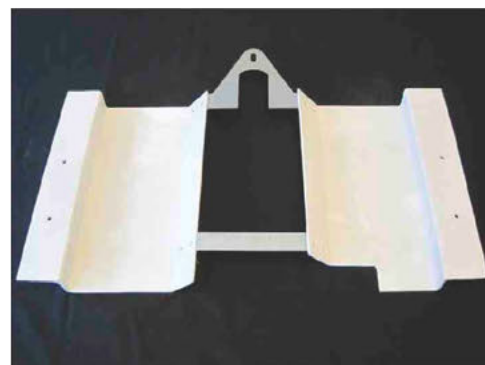
TA/TB/TC cast alloy brake drums **Price: £1104**

Owing to continued demand, NTG have commissioned another limited batch of their superb cast alloy brake drums with steel liners for the TA, TB and TC. Now back in stock, they are being offered at the special price of £1104. Transform your brakes with this period style modification, and improve your car's appearance at the same time! Visit NTG Motor Services Limited at 282-4 Bramford Road, Ipswich IP1 4AY, call 01473 406031/2 or visit www.mgbits.com

MGB/Midget dual system brake master cylinder pushrod

Price: £18.90

These pushrods for the brake master cylinder on dual system MGBs (BHA5132) and MG Midget 1500s (37H2731) haven't been available for some time, so their fresh availability from Leacy Classics will come as a welcome relief to many, as will the £18.90 price tag. Call 0121 356 3003 to order, or shop online at www.leacyclassics.com



RV8 catalyst heat shield

Price: £99

V8 specialist Clive Wheatley has just had this catalyst heat shield remade in heat resistant composite material for the RV8. It bolts under the car, and helps stop heat from the catalyst from working its way into the car. Call 01746 710810 or check out their website at www.mgv8.homestead.com

MG TF trailing rear suspension link assembly **Price: £99.59**

XPart now have RGD000620 and RGD000630, the RH and LH trailing rear suspension link assembly for the TF, back in stock after being unavailable for several months. It has been reverse engineered from the original engineering drawings, and is being supplied at a price of £99.59 each, sensibly priced for MG owners who need to keep their vehicles on the road. Available now from AutoService Centres - find your nearest via www.xpartautoservicecentre.com





MG TF aluminium radiator

Price: £99.95 (including free UK mainland delivery)

MGOC Spares has managed to source limited stocks of factory original radiators for MG TF models manufactured using an aluminium core to provide improved cooling efficiency. Representing great value for money at only £99.95, MGOC Spares are offering them (item PCC001140) this month with free UK mainland delivery worth £8.45! To order call MGOC Spares on 01954 230928 or visit www.mgocspares.co.uk

MGB/Midget/V8 radiators

Price: various

The MGB Hive Ltd have a complete range of radiators in stock. The all-new radiators are:

NRP 1142 MGB 1968-76: £109.95

NRP 1154 MGB 1976-on: £119.95

NRP1059 V8: £154.95

ARC54 MGC: £119.95

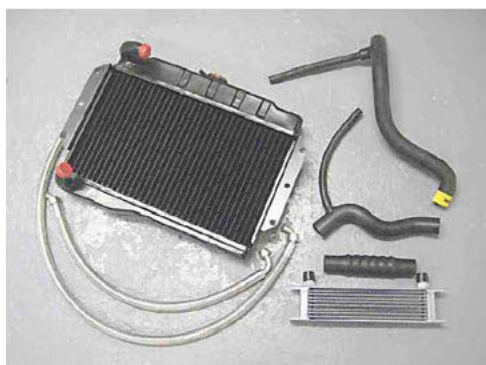
ARA 318 crossflow 1275 Midget: £94.95

NRP 1028 1500 Midget: £94.95

ARO 9807 10-row oil cooler: £21.95

ARA 221 13-row oil cooler: £23.95

Also available are the hoses, oil cooler pipes both in rubber and stainless steel, rad caps and more. Order on line at www.mgbhive.co.uk, call 01945 700500, or collect in person from Marshalls Bank, Parson Drove, Wisbech, Cambs. PE13 4JE.



Trim reviver

Price: £9.99

ValetPRO's brand new restorer and protector, Black to the Future, turns the clock back on old or faded plastic trim, vinyl hoods and tyres, offering a deep, dark, black, lustrous and natural-as-new finish that lasts for three months per application. It also prevents ageing when applied to new plastic trim, tyres or vinyl surfaces so it can be used as much as a preventative step as well as a quick fix. Sold in 250ml panel pots, it is available now through detailing stockists - to find your nearest, head to www.valetpro.eu.

Machine Mart catalogue

Price: £free

Machine Mart's spring/summer 2015 catalogue is out now, 470 pages packed full of an incredible range of tools for home, garden, garage and workshop use. It contains over 1500 price cuts and new products. You can pick one up at any of Machine Mart's 65 superstores nationwide, order one via the website at www.machinemart.co.uk or by calling 0844 880 1265.



ZT clutch master cylinder kit

Price: £118.87

The first fruit of a joint venture between XPart and Tazu Parts from Poland is this clutch master cylinder kit for the MG ZT and Rover 75. Available for LHD (STC100156T) and RHD (STC100146T) fitment, they offer significant improvements compared to the original with a reinforced pump body made of high grade aluminium instead of plastic, and a solid one piece piston with replaceable seals providing high reliability and smooth operation. Available now from AutoService Centres - find your nearest via www.xpartauto servicecentre.com



Cobra classic sofa

Price: from £699

Cobra's hand-finished, custom made two-seater sofa looks exactly like a stretched racing bucket seat - because that's exactly what it is! A substantial, mandrel bent tubular steel frame holds it all together, which can be finished in any colour you desire. In fact, the whole sofa may be ordered in literally any colour, trim or design combination you want including leather, suede, vinyl, dinamica, alcantara, cloth or even an inlay that matches the curtains. Priced from £699, for more information on Cobra Seats click to www.cobraseats.com



EVENT PREVIEW



Charity event heralds spring at Prescott

Gotherington, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL52 9RD.

Sunday May 10.

As dependable as the cuckoo but a darn sight noisier, Classics at Prescott heralds the spring season at this legendary motoring venue as it roars into action on Sunday, May 10. Organised by the Cheltenham Cleeve Vale Rotary Club, the popular event brings together an array of pre-1980s vehicles from across the globe, allowing their enthusiastic drivers to drive the world-famous hill in return for a charity donation.

Crowds can expect to see around 200 vehicles of all shapes and sizes take to the track as drivers tackle the

world-renowned speed straights and hairpin bends in a series of marshalled but untimed runs. For the less daring, gentle cavalcades up the hill will show vehicles off in all their glory, while event visitors can admire the wide variety of classic, vintage and special vehicles on display in the paddock areas.

The event, which is sponsored by Stewart Miller & Peter James Insurance, raised more than £16,000 last year and has now generated more than £160,000 for a range of charities since its launch in 2004. Director Peter James said: 'Always a fantastic way to

celebrate the real start of Prescott's spring classic vehicle season, this event has something for everyone – beautiful scenery, stunning cars and thrilling on-road action. It is a fantastic family day out and raises valuable funds for a variety of worthy causes – we are thoroughly looking forward to meeting all the visitors who come along to enjoy the day.'

The event runs from 10am-4pm. Spectators are welcome, with a suggested donation of £15 per car. For more details about the event and how to take part, visit www.cleevevale.org.uk

APRIL 4

Rufforth Autojumble

Rufforth Park, Wetherby Road, YO23 3QF. Doors open at 8am for the public, sellers welcome 6-9am. Indoor pitches start from £17. Admission £2 per person. 01904 738620, www.rufforthautojumble.com

APRIL 5

Hatherleigh Autojumble

Hatherleigh Cattle Market, Devon EX20 3HT. Gates open at 9am. Admission £2. Pre-booked stalls £12, stalls on the day £14. Booking forms from www.devonvintagecarclub.com or call 01363 82867.

APRIL 10-12

Wild Hare Run

Virginia International Raceway, Virginia, USA. This is also the MG Vintage Racers' designated Focus Event for 2015, with MGVR's special awards and socials. www.mgvr.org, www.vintagedrive.com

APRIL 12

MG Era Day

Brooklands, Weybridge, Surrey. MGs of all ages are welcome at this annual event. There will be action on the test hill, a concours d'elegance and a cavalcade on the Mercedes-Benz World circuit. Parking for MGs only on the museum site – access through the Campbell Gate off Brooklands Road (the B374). 01932 857381, www.brooklandsmuseum.com

APRIL 12

Newark Autojumble

Newark and Notts Showground, NG24 2NY. Customer early bird pass £10 (8-9am), day admission £6 (from 10am). 01507 529470, www.newarkautojumble.co.uk

APRIL 12

Shakedown Run

60 mile run through the Peak District and South Yorkshire with the Chesterfield MG

Group. £15 per car. Entry forms from www.chesterfield-mg-group.co.uk or call 01246 414771.

APRIL 12

Malvern Spring Classic Car Show and Autojumble

Avon Halls and outside, Three Counties Showground, Malvern, Worcestershire WR13 6NW. 01484 667776, www.classicshows.org

APRIL 12

Spring Run

Starting at Millets Farm near Abingdon or Hatton Country World near Warwick and running to Sudeley Castle and Gardens near Winchcombe, Glos. Organised by the MGCC's MGB Register, a warm welcome is extended to all models of MG. Entry form from www.mgb-register.org/MGB-Register/Spring_Run_Entry_2015.html or call 01858 463417.

APRIL 12

Practice Autotest

East Kirkby, Lincolnshire. Practice Autotest where all competitors are eligible to participate, irrespective of whether you are a member of the MG Car Club or not. www.mgcclincolnshire.co.uk

APRIL 13

Carole Nash Classic Meet

Five Arrows, Waddesdon, Bucks. Starts 7.30, and includes a talk by Fuzz Townshend of TV's *Car SOS*. 01296 658786.

APRIL 14

Classic Car Night

Ace Cafe London, Ace Corner, Stonebridge, London NW10 7UD. Includes Midget and Sprite Club monthly meet from 6pm. 020 8961 1000, www.ace-cafe-london.com

APRIL 18

Classic Virgins Day

Heritage Motor Centre, Gaydon. A day designed to encourage and support potential classic car owners. £65 per person. www.heritage-motor-centre.co.uk, 01926 645033.

APRIL 18

Pride of Longbridge

Cofton Park, Longbridge, B31 2BQ. 10am-4pm. Bringing all cars with a Longbridge connection together, as well as the people who made them. Email: prideoflongbridge2006@gmail.com

APRIL 19

Drive and Ride In Day

Lakeland Motor Museum, Backbarrow, Ulverston LA12 8TA. Up to 100 vehicles are expected. No need to book – there will be plenty of free parking for owners to display their vehicles. Drivers and their passengers will also receive vouchers for discounted entry to the museum. www.lakelandmotormuseum.co.uk

APRIL 19

Arundel Gathering and Picnic

Arundel Castle, West Sussex BN18 9AB. Popular Chichester MGOC event. www.chichestermgoc.synthesite.com/

APRIL 26

Drive It Day in Lincolnshire

Once again, the MGCC Lincs Centre is organising an event in support of National Drive It Day. This year the event will

Lake Garda & the Stelvio Pass



10 Days From £749.00 Per Person
June, July & September Departures
including: P&O Ferry Crossing Dover/Calais,
2/3 Overnight Stops in each Direction, 5 or 7 Nights
in Lake Garda, Stelvio Pass, All Breakfast & Dinners

Pebble Beach & Monterey Classic Car Week



13 Days From £3995.00 Per Person
10th to 22nd August 2015
incl: Return Flights, 11 Nights Accommodation
Admission to Pebble Beach Auction & Pebble Beach
Concours d'Elegance + Car hire & Pacific Drive

New York & New England in the Fall



18 Days From £2999.00 Per Person
25th September to 12th October 2015
incl: Flights, 16 Nights Hotel Accommodation
Car Hire or Ship your Own Car Option
Meals as Itinerary, Great Drives & Scenery

The Mille Miglia



11 Days From £999.00 Per Person
11th to 21st May
including: P&O Crossing Dover/Calais,
2 Stopovers in each direction, 4 Nights Lake Garda
2 Nights Tuscany, All Breakfast & Dinners as stated

MORE EXCITING TOURS

ISLE OF WIGHT 5 Days, 4 Nights	6th to 10th June From £339.00 Per Person
COTSWOLDS, CHEDDAR & BATH 2 or 3 Nights	June & September From £99.00 Per Person
GOODWOOD REVIVAL 3 Days, 2 Nights	11-13 September From £309.00 Per Person
LE MANS CLASSIC 2016 3 or 4 Nights	7-10 July Camping from £199 / Hotel from £399
NORTH CYPRUS CLASSIC CAR TOUR 8 Days, 7 Nights by Air	12 Nov & 17 March From £899.00 Per Person
ROME, SORRENTO & AMALFI BY MOTORAIL 10 Days, 9 Nights	May & Sept From £1699.00 Per Person
WONDERS OF WALES 4 Days, 3 Nights	May & July From £229.00 Per Person
2015 LAON HISTORIQUE 4 Days, 3 Nights	29 May to 1st June From £189.00 Per Person
D-DAY LANDINGS & ATLANTIC WALL 4 Days, 3 Nights	May & Sept From £289.00 Per Person
IRELAND'S CAUSEWAY COAST 5 Days, 4 Nights	May to September From £399.00 Per Person
ARCTIC HIGHWAY CHALLENGE 23 Days, 22 Nights	4th to 26th June From £3250.00 Per Person
ENCHANTING BLACK FOREST 8 Days, 7 Nights	21 June & 6 Sept From £599.00 Per Person
AUSTRIA & LAKE BLEED (MOTORAIL RETURN) 14 Days, 13 Nights	15th-28th June From £1199.00 Per Person
LAKE DISTRICT 4 Days, 3 Nights	June & September From £229.00 Per Person
WW1 100th ANNIVERSARY TOURS 4 Days, 3 Nights	20 May & 23 Oct From £239.00 Per Person
THE BELGIAN DELIGHTS 2 or 3 Nights	May, June & Sept From £149.00 Per Person
CLASSIC CHAMPAGNE TOUR 4 Days, 3 Nights	16th May & 19th Sept From £299.00 Per Person
THE ISLE OF MAN 5 Days, 4 Nights	10th May, 14th July & 7th Sept From £349.00 Per Person
2015 SPA CLASSIC 4 Days, 3 Nights	22nd to 25th May From £259.00 Per Person
LAKE COMO & STELVIO PASS 10 Days, 9 Nights	3rd June & 9th Sept From £799.00 Per Person
SCOTTISH ISLANDS & HIGHLANDS 11 Days, 10 Nights	3rd to 13th July From £1599.00 Per Person
GUERNSEY & JERSEY 2 ISLAND TOUR 8 Days, 7 Nights	May, June & Sept From £699.00 Per Person
JERSEY INT'L MOTORING FESTIVAL 5 Days, 4 Nights	4th to 8th June From £399.00 Per Person
ANGOULEME 'CIRCUIT DES REMPARTS' 6 Days, 5 Nights	17th-22nd Sept From £489.00 Per Person
GORDON BENNETT ROUTE 4 Days, 3 Nights	12th to 15th May From £229.00 Per Person
DUTCH WINDMILLS & WATERWAYS 4 Days, 3 Nights	May & Sept From £299.00 Per Person
LE MANS 24 HEURES Packages valid for 9 days	13th to 14th June From £199.00 Per Person
THE 2015 BRUGES CLASSIC 4 Days, 3 Nights	28th-31st August From £289.00 Per Person

Picos & Pyrenees



15 Days From £1499.00 Per Person
8th June & 8th September Departures
incl: Return Ferry Crossing Portsmouth/Calais,
2 Overnight Stops in each Direction, 10 Nights in
the Picos & Pyrenees, 14 Breakfast & 12 Dinners

The Swiss Alps



10 Days From £1199.00 Per Person
26th June to 5th July
incl: Return P&O Ferry Crossing Dover/Calais,
2 Overnight Stops in each Direction, 5 Nights in
the Swiss Alps, All Breakfast & Dinners as stated

Norwegian Fjords & the Atlantic Road



15 Days From £1999.00 Per Person
15th to 29th August
Return Ferry Crossing Hull/Harwich to Holland
11 Nights Hotel Accommodation, Flam Railway
Journey, All Breakfast & Dinners as stated

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From £1999.00 Per Person
18th August & 5th September

Including - Return P&O Ferry
Crossing Dover/Calais,
18 Nights Good Hotel
Accommodation
Meals as per itinerary



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Day. This year the event will take place at Burghley House, near Stamford and will include drive-ins from either Lincoln, Boston or Swallow, a walking treasure hunt and a Pride of Ownership Competition. The entry fee is £6 per vehicle, and Burghley impose a £5 parking fee for all vehicles entering the grounds which will be collected there on the day. The club have secured an exclusive parking area adjacent to the house and discounted entry to it of 2 for 1. Entry forms available at www.mgclincolnshire.co.uk

APRIL 26

Drive It Day in Cumbria

Classic and motor clubs in Cumbria and further afield are gathering at Dalemmain near Penrith 11am-2pm to celebrate Drive It Day and raise funds in memory of Stuart Turnbull, the President of Wigton Motor Club, a member of the MGCC for over 30 years and the co-ordinator of the club displays at the Cumbria Classic Car Show. Stuart died suddenly last September and the clubs are raising money from donations for causes selected by Stuart's family. Dalemmain Mansion and Gardens will be open along with the café and shop. Further information on www.wigtonmc.co.uk

APRIL 26

Drive It Day

Lakeland Motor Museum, Backbarrow, Ulverston LA12 8TA. Up to 150 vehicles are expected as part of this national day celebrating the best of the UK's transport heritage. No need to book - there will be plenty of free parking. Drivers and their passengers will also receive vouchers for discounted entry to the museum. www.lakelandmotormuseum.co.uk

APRIL 26

Toy and Collectors Fair

Heritage Motor Centre, Gaydon. Over 100 stalls selling all sorts of toys and collectable items. Call 01926 645029 or see www.heritage-motor-centre.co.uk

APRIL 26

Spring Run

Denbies Vineyard (RH5 6AA), Dorking to Loxwood. MGCC South East Centre event comprising a two hour run (10am-12 noon), followed by a 90 minute canal boat ride with the Wey and Arun Canal Trust. www.mgcars.org.uk/mgccse

MAY 2

Britfest

Horseshoe Lake Park, 72 Eyland Ave, Succasunna, NJ 07876, USA. The first British car show of the new driving season in the Mid Atlantic area. Vendors \$35 per space. Cars \$15 until April 15 and \$20 after. www.mgccnj.org

MAY 2

Rufforth Autojumble

Rufforth Park, Wetherby Road, YO23 3QF. Doors open at 8am for the public, sellers welcome 6-9am. Indoor pitches start from £17. Admission £2 per person. 01904 738620. www.rufforthautojumble.com

MAY 3

Classic Vehicle Rally and Country Fayre

Earsham Hall, Bungay NR35 2AN. Gates open 10am-5pm. Entry to the public £3 for adults, under 16s free. Classic cars, motorcycles, tractors, commercial and military vehicles. Other attractions on the day will include food and craft stalls, licensed bar, trade stands, autojumble, children's games, entertainers and workshops. Funds raised from the event will go to local Lions causes. If you have a vehicle to show, you can obtain a registration form for free entry from 07599 935113 or michaelgardiner@hotmail.com, or download from www.bungaylions.org.uk

MAY 10

Regency Run

From Brooklands to Brighton. Organised jointly by the MGOC and MGCC. £34 per car with two occupants. 01954 231125, www.mgownersclub.co.uk, 01235 555552, www.mgcc.co.uk

Auction calendar

Auction details can sometimes change at short notice. Readers are advised to confirm dates, venues and viewing arrangements before travelling.

Mar 19: DVCA, Thelhampton House, near Dorchester, Dorset, DT2 7LG. Tel: 01963 363353, www.dvca.co.uk

Apr 4: Anglia Car Auctions, Beveridge Way, King's Lynn PE30 4NB. Tel: 01553 771881, www.angliacarauctions.co.uk

Apr 15: H&H, Imperial War Museum, Duxford CB22 4QR. Tel: 01925 210035, www.classic-auctions.com

Apr 21: Barons, Sandown Park, Esher, Surrey KT10 9AJ. Tel: 023 8066 8413, www.barons-auctions.com

Apr 21: Classic Car Auctions, Silverstone, Northants NN12 8TN. Tel: 01926 640888, www.classiccarauctions.co.uk

Apr 24: SWVA, 61 Ringwood Road, Parkstone, Poole, Dorset BH14 0RG. Tel: 01202 745466, www.swva.co.uk

Apr 25: Mathewsons, Thornton le Dale, N Yorks YO18 7LH. Tel: 01751 474455, www.mathewsons.co.uk

Apr 25: EAMA, Copper Smith Way, Wymondham, NR18 0WY. Tel: 01953 859 180, www.eama-norwich.co.uk

May 13: Brightwells, Easters Court, Leominster, Herefordshire HR6 0DE. Tel: 01568 611122, www.brightwells.com

May 16: Coys, Ascot Racecourse, Ascot, Berkshire SL5 7JX. Tel: 0208 614 7888, www.coys.co.uk

May 23: Silverstone Auctions, The Wing, Silverstone Circuit. 01926 691141, www.silverstoneauctions.com

MAY 10

Spring Autotest

East Kirkby, Lincolnshire. All competitors must be members of the MG Car Club or another MSA affiliated club which has been invited to participate. See www.mgclincolnshire.co.uk

MAY 12

Ace Cafe London

Ace Corner, Stonebridge, London NW10 7UD. Includes Midget and Sprite Club monthly meet from 6pm. 020 8961 1000, www.acecafeevents.com

MAY 17

Herts Auto Show

Stanborough Park, Stanborough Road, Welwyn Garden City AL8 6DQ. Charity car and bike show in aid of the Make A Wish Foundation UK. A large selection of vehicles from past to present on display as well as local companies and dealerships showing current models. Also kids' rides, stalls and other facilities to make this an event for all the family. Gates open from 10am and will finish at 4pm. Adults £5, children £3,

under-fives go free. For further information see www.hertsautoshow.co.uk

MAY 17

Gaydon Spring Classic, Gaydon Fringe and Gaydon Spring Cream Tea Run

Heritage Motor Centre, Gaydon. A popular gathering for all vehicles over 20 years old. Call 01926 645029, email: shows@heritage-motor-centre.co.uk or see www.heritage-motor-centre.co.uk

MAY 20-22

Regis Classic Tour

Based at Chilworth Manor north of Southampton and visiting Hampshire, Wiltshire and Dorset. Raising money for Against Breast Cancer and Orchid - Fighting Male Cancer, having raised over £450,000 from the previous 17 tours. Call 01243 542674 or visit www.theregisclassictour.co.uk

MAY 22-25

Spa Classic

Spa-Francorchamps, Ardennes, Belgium. www.spa-francorchamps.be

The *MG Enthusiast Events Diary* is a FREE service to publicise your event. We want to include details of ALL events whether big, small, formal or informal just so long as MGs are welcome. To be included, we need the following information:

Date • Event name • Venue • Brief two-line description • Contact details

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The future is electric

I have always been a car guy, and I've always loved technology, so when the Tesla Model S came out, I just had to have one. It was quite simply the first fully electric car without compromises. Unlike most of the golf carts out there that masqueraded as road-worthy, the Model S's size, range and performance were all at acceptable levels. So I bought one of the first 20 cars to be sold in Switzerland. It was, in retrospect, an insanely risky decision. At the time, in 2013, there were almost no charging stations in Europe, the news was full of stories of battery fires, and no-one knew what the car would be like after a couple of years. If it was anything like my iPhone 5, I wouldn't reach the end of my driveway before the batteries died.

I belong to a group of enthusiasts who meet early on weekend mornings for drives into the mountains. I showed them the Model S and they nodded politely, but I think they saw it as a curiosity, and secretly rued the absence of a big, throaty engine. Yet today, that has all changed. Porsche, Cadillac and Ford are all developing fully electric vehicles to compete with the

Model S. As I write, the Geneva Auto Show is about to open and many of the major manufacturers will be showcasing prototypes or plans for fully electric or hybrid models. Plus tech giants like Apple, Samsung and Google have all announced electric vehicle projects. So does all this activity harken the end to the fossil fuelled car? I think the answer is yes, and sooner than anticipated. After all, there are solid scientific reasons why fossil fuels are called non-renewable.

However, the reason for the change, I believe, is something much more practical: convenience. Electric cars are simply more convenient than petrol cars, and will only become more so. My electric car is always full. This is because I plug it in every night. It has no engine, so I have mountains of storage space. I almost never have to take it to the garage because upgrades and fixes are downloaded overnight. The other day when I started the car, I noticed that there were lines in the rear camera to help me reverse.

We are not at the tipping point just yet. Battery range needs to be improved, so that



motorists (an antiquated term) can travel long distances without recharging – I think the magic number is 1000km on a single charge. We still have a few years before we reach that number.

What about the current car giants – will they be the same companies in the future? I think that probably the answer is yes, but not all of them, and the market will be redistributed. Automobile manufacturing is a high fixed-cost business, and not an easy one to enter. Tesla is one of the very few exceptions, and a lot of their success can be put down to timing, luck and chutzpah.

Most of the car companies will survive, I believe, albeit in

different forms. The basic structure of an automobile will not change that much, unlike the motor. I would worry more about the oil and gas companies, whose life span – which was already finite – will likely be reduced.

Mike Wade
Professor of Innovation
IMD Business School
Lausanne, Switzerland

Thanks Mike for those interesting thoughts on the future of motoring. SAIC has been developing electric cars and showcased the MG EV (pictured top) last year. How many of our readers see this as the way forward? – Ed



A stitch in time

We have just had a TF brought in with the rear suspension collapsed. On removing the rear wheel, it would appear that the bottom shocker bolt sheared causing the driveshaft to shear plus some other damage – not a pretty sight and expensive, plus the availability of parts is not good. And all for the sake of a £2.50 bolt! Perhaps owners of higher mileage cars might want to check this bolt has not worked loose, and maybe consider changing it?

Steve Hall

Cowley, not Longbridge

I notice in the March issue a letter about White Gold RV8s from Bryan Young stating that his friend Frank saw his White Gold RV8 being built at Longbridge. Well he did not. All production RV8s were built at Rover Group, Cowley, now MINI Plant Oxford, the old Pressed Steel Plant.

George Wilder

Queues were unacceptable

We attended the MG/Triumph Spares Day at Stoneleigh on March 1, and having bought tickets on-line we were all looking forward to a good day out. Imagine our frustration when, having driven to Stoneleigh and queued for what seemed like hours to gain access to the main gate, we were turned away with no reason given and directed to the rear entrance some five miles away. Along with countless others we then queued for another 45 minutes, blocking the Warwickshire country roads around the village of Stoneleigh. What made the situation even more frustrating was that when we turned round to go home in total disgust, I made my way to the main gate to collect data to write a letter of complaint, only to be waved straight into the park with no queuing whatsoever. So we called our friends and directed them to use the main gate too. In fact the areas dedicated to parking were only about ¼ full, and the access roads were all clear. It appeared to us that the park-employed security staff had not been correctly briefed on the volume of traffic expected, and additional entrances to Stoneleigh should have been opened. We would suggest that a written apology be published by the organisers for all the delay and frustration caused, and a full refund be granted to those who got fed up of waiting and went home.

CD Readwin

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Don Hayter



Don Hayter joined MG as a body designer in 1956, and worked on all the MGs built from then until the Abingdon factory's closure in 1980, by which time he had risen to be MG's Chief Engineer.

I have always liked engines that are simple, honest and robust, and we had plenty of those at MG. The XPAG and B-series families are the ones that come most commonly to mind when talking about MG, but we also inherited the A-series engine when production of the Austin-Healey Sprite began at Abingdon in March 1958 and this was a great little motor. We used it in the Sprites and Midgets right up to 1974, while it also powered the MG1100 and MG1300 built at Longbridge from 1962-1971. It later made a reappearance in an MG after the Abingdon factory had closed, in 1982 when the MG Metro revived the marque.

We had bid it farewell back in 1974 when we were instructed to fit Triumph's 1500 engine to the Midget instead. Naturally we were not particularly happy about this. By that time we had a new boss in Harry Webster, who was a Triumph man through and through but who had been put in charge of Longbridge and acquired MG at the same time. He was all right and I got on with him fine, but he never came down to Abingdon. None of the bosses came down to Abingdon, they all thought we were out in the sticks or something. That might have worked to our advantage – as long as we got the budget money, we could just get on with doing our jobs.

However, it was not the mere whim of a Triumph man that brought us the Triumph engine, but legislation in the USA. Ensuring engines complied with American legislation was a moving target that consumed ever increasing

costs, and the idea was that if Triumph and MG were to use a common engine for their Spitfire and Midget, it would make sense financially as it could be developed in a single programme to meet emissions for both of them. Fortunately for us, the Triumph engine was another good, honest and reasonably robust engine very much in the mould of the A-series.

The first installation of the Triumph 1500 engine in a Midget required testing to MG (BMC) standards for durability, cooling and general accessibility, testing half a dozen cars over 50,000 miles, running day and night if necessary. So we got an engine and put it on our development test assuming it was a road-proved engine, only to find we knackered it running in Germany doing high speed testing – we knocked the bottom end out.

Jimmy Cox and myself took the failed engine apart, and then also stripped down a brand new one to compare. We found that the finish on the crankshaft was over 15 microns, which means it was rough. They were nothing like the finish we had been getting at MG, which was about 11 or 12 microns. We went to Triumph and said we weren't going to run the engines until they improved them enough to complete our tests, so we improved the Spitfire as well. They hadn't done the same amount of testing as we had.

One significant aspect with the conversion was that when using the existing Midget radiator and adapting water hose couplings, we found that water flow through the Triumph

cylinder block was insufficient to give cooling temperatures low enough to meet our standards on heat soak after high speed running. A change to a new crossflow radiator system plus changing the mountings and hoses gave compliance to our standard level. Modified crash testing and road proving at motorway speeds was OK, but we also had to ensure that the modified car was in the same weight test compliance bracket as the Spitfire (they were nearly the same, coincidentally) so that emissions levels could be the same.

The changeover did have one bonus in the fact that the increased power from the 1493cc Triumph engine above the 1275cc A-series gave the Midget an overall higher top speed. This enabled me to lower the Midget rear axle ratio, which reduced noise and slightly improved fuel economy. Minor changes to gear lever position, dials and a new exhaust system finalised the specification for the 1975 model year.

The initial reluctance on our part to use a Triumph engine in an MG had been partly down to marque loyalties, but also because we liked the A-series as it was a good engine. The extra power and taller back axle did improve the Midget in some ways, but that was a side effect and the change was all about saving money on development.

This change obviously coincided with the switch from chrome to rubber bumpers, a change that was also dictated by US legislation. Whatever we thought of those, we knew that we couldn't afford to lose the American market so we had to grin and bear it. Certainly it wasn't the disaster some people claim, as it allowed production to continue for several more years at Abingdon. And since so much of the town depended on MG for its income, building cars that we could sell had to be the number one priority. **DH**

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Roger Parker is a former policeman whose technical skill and wide experience of MGs form the backbone of our own Technical Q&A pages.

This month I want to focus on some simple attention given to the eBay ZS and my TF160 that had to be done during winter. In the course of these tasks we encountered a couple of unusual problems, and knowing about them (and how we cured them) may well be helpful to other owners.

The £280 eBay ZS 120 saloon had gained a large rear spoiler on the boot as the original small spoiler just didn't suit the car. All was well until Matt noticed that when opening the boot, water could be heard sloshing around in the right side leg of the spoiler.

Quite where the water entered is not entirely clear, although the main suspects are the two bright Allen headed trim screws on the top outer edge of the spoiler. Certainly the lower fixing studs were watertight, otherwise the water would have drained out naturally. The spoiler was removed and a small, unobtrusive hole drilled in the rear lower corner to allow instant draining – surprisingly it took nearly five minutes for the water to drain out entirely. The other spoiler foot was also drilled, even though it was dry. In addition, the cosmetic trim screws were removed and a dab of silicone sealant was added before the screws were refitted, just to help seal these.

My TF160 (a mid-2002 Sprint model) was a 2009 'distress' purchase from an owner anxious to sell because he couldn't get on top of the problems and desperately wanted shot of the car. I

wasn't in the market for another car at the time, but a price of under half the normal going rate for a roadworthy and MoT'd car was too much of a temptation for me to resist. It did have cosmetic and mechanical problems, such as 34 minor dents down both sides of the car and a couple of poor attempts to rectify, minor cracks in both bumpers, plus the driver's seat Alcantara had taken on the look of a rock-strewn moon with bobbles of material, but all these were minor cosmetic issues and the car still looked presentable from 15 metres. Plus at the time it had only covered 39,000 miles.

Of more concern was the owner's worry over symptoms that a second head gasket failure was looming, not long after the first when it had been fixed with an MLS gasket. However, the car has now just tripped 60,000 miles and nothing has yet occurred. (The small 'mayo' visible on the dipstick has been proven to be internal engine condensation from being used primarily for short journeys.)

What was definitely wrong was that the car was unstable over 40mph and a quick tyre check confirmed Goodyear Eagle F1 GSD2 on the front but GSD3 on the rear. A very swift solution was to fit a spare pair of GSD2 tyres kept for my MGF, and that *almost* cured the stability problem. Further investigation revealed that the lower front suspension arm on the rear nearside suspension was bent, something that I later learned was the result of a previous winter slide into a kerb that demanded a hub and bearing

change, but the bent arm was missed. Renewal of the arm, a comprehensive check and four wheel alignment solved those problems, leaving just the cosmetic issues to be dealt with over the following months.

One amusing aspect was that the car came with a stainless steel exhaust that had massive 5in x 3in oval tailpipes and a pretty awful flat flappy note. That was quickly replaced with an MGOC standard spec stainless system which has a much more appropriate note. Then I sold the system I'd removed on eBay for a couple of pounds more than the replacement cost!

The car has given good service since, although a minor glitch recently was that the reversing lights often failed to come on, or then finally woke up just as you stopped reversing. They did seem to work in daylight and not in the dark, but that was coincidental to daytime driving being short trips and night being much longer because obviously heat expansion was affecting the operation. Then immediate action was needed when the lights came on straight away, but remained on after the lever had been moved out of reverse.

The logical thought was that the switch was playing up. Fitting a new one was a weekend job for a dry day as it is much easier to get to the wiring connections from the top. That means removing the hard top before moving the hood to access the engine cover. Switch access from the side with the left rear wheel removed is fine and the switch took only a few minutes to take off, check against the new one, swap the spacer washer from the old to new and fit it. Testing didn't give the expected result as the lights stayed illuminated all the time the ignition was on, but an additional washer with the spacer saw normal operation return. This is perhaps something other MGF and TF owners may want to note for future reference. **RP**

“The ZS had gained a large rear spoiler. All was well until Matt noticed that when opening the boot, water could be heard sloshing around in the right leg of it.”



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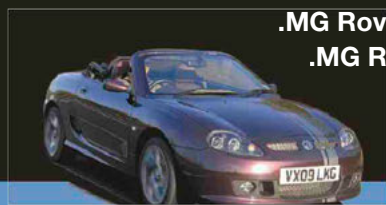
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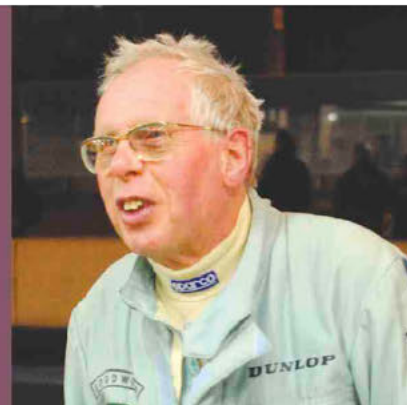


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Barry Sidery-Smith



Barry Sidery-Smith has been racing since 1959. In 1970 he bought the ex-Works MGB DRX 255C and he has been delighting MG racing fans ever since.

I read recently about a £120,000 Ford Mexico, which was stolen in under 60 seconds from a classic car showroom not far from where I live in Surrey. This audacious theft took place at night when a Land Rover was reversed through the front window of the showroom and the Ford was dragged out. Of course the fact that this was a fully prepared race car meant that the thieves' job was made easier because the car was fitted with mandatory FIA tow straps which would normally be used my for dragging the car from gravel traps etc. The gang did not even look at more modern cars in the showroom. Part of the reason for this may be because since the 1990s car security has been greatly improved, with complex locks and immobilisers fitted to most new cars.

Race cars are particularly susceptible to theft, as many do not have door locks or ignition keys. One infamous theft took place from the car park at the NEC at the 2009 Autosport show. A car transporter was delivering a couple of the latest Mitsubishi Evo rally cars ahead of the show. When the delivery driver returned from dropping off the first car at the main hall, he found that someone had driven the second car off the transporter and vanished.

Of course when I started out as a young motor trader, cars were anything but secure. All you had to do to open most soft top cars was to put your hand under a flap in the roof and pull the door handle. Cars back then were also incredibly easy to start with just a hairpin or a screwdriver. We would always try to box in the most valuable cars at our garage, hoping that anyone thinking of stealing them would be put

off by the thought of having to move other cars out of the way first to get to the one they wanted.

Mind you, not all of my customers were entirely honest. I remember one husband and wife who bought a Lotus Elan on credit with the help of hire purchase, which was easy to come by in those days with minimal checks. The husband used the Elan for racing, but fell behind with payments. The hire purchase company naturally wanted their car back but failed to find it, so the police were called in. I remember bumping into the couple at Silverstone, where the husband was competing in the Elan. Whilst the race was taking place, the police turned up looking for the car. The wife quickly held out a pit board, notifying her husband that the police were in the pitlane. On the next lap, with the race in full swing, the driver pulled the Elan off the track and drove straight out of the circuit and home without stopping. I then had to give his poor wife a lift home.

I also recall driving at an event at Chimay in Belgium which involved a mixture of races for both classic cars and motorbikes. Some of the riders were concerned about leaving their motorbikes out overnight. A kind lorry driver in the paddock offered to let them lock their bikes in the back of his lorry. But when they woke up in the morning the driver, his lorry and their bikes had disappeared.

In the case of the recent Ford Mexico theft, the sad reality is that the car was probably broken down for its expensive parts which can be easily sold on to unsuspecting members of the public via internet websites. The criminals can conduct the whole transaction without

ever having to meet the buyer and can quickly disappear without a trace. A good friend of mine has been an MG specialist for over 25 years. During that time he has bought and dismantled hundreds of MGs, storing the engines, gearboxes and rear axles in outbuildings at his workshops. This Aladdin's cave of spare parts has proved invaluable in keeping many more MGs on the road over the years, until about two years ago when a gang of scrap metal thieves broke in one night and cleared everything out. Amongst this huge haul were two complete MGC engines. But it is doubtful that the thieves knew or cared what they were taking, so they probably got melted down with the others.

But it is not just businesses that need to be careful. I know a chap who likes to restore cars at home for a hobby. He normally has a couple of projects on his driveway awaiting their turn to be restored. He would regularly be pestered by dubious characters knocking at his front door offering to buy the cars for scrap. After one of his project cars was stolen, he took to disguising them under tarpaulins to look like building materials.

Another thing that makes theft of classic car parts easier for criminals is that cars were designed to be worked on by owners. I know someone who returned to a car park to find the rear lights had been stolen from his Triumph Herald, a task which just requires a screwdriver and the loosening of two easily accessed screws. To carry out the same task on a modern car would normally require access to the interior and the removal of internal panels. The last thing I want to do is discourage anyone from owning or using a classic car, but I do recommend that you take sensible steps to make sure your car is secure, so you can keep on enjoying it for many years to come. **BS-S**

“With the race in full swing, the driver pulled the Elan off the track and drove straight out of the circuit and home without stopping.”

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Buying on **impulse**

When Pat and Chris Shurlock went down to their local MG-Rover dealer to collect Pat's Rover 400 after a head gasket repair, they knew next to nothing about MGs. So how did they end up with a brand new MGF 1.6 a couple of weeks later? And more to the point, was it a sensible purchase?

Interview and pictures: Simon Goldsworthy



What first attracted you to the MGF?

Chris: The head gasket failed in a big way on Pat's Rover 400 in 2001. We'd decided to bite the bullet and have it repaired, and had gone to Marshall's to collect it. Before we went in I had said to Pat: 'Don't look at any new cars. We are just going to pay for the Rover and take it home.'

Pat: And I said: 'I don't need any new cars!'

Chris: This was Marshall's in St Neots, before they went over to Cambridge. Right in front of the counter they had this lovely red MGF 1.6, and next to that a yellow MGF Trophy. I didn't know the difference between the two at that stage (other than a price difference of about £7000), but while Pat was paying the bill for the Rover, I sat in the red MGF. Patrick the salesman came over and I said: 'No, really, I'm sitting here killing time while my wife settles up for her Rover.'

The MG must have made an impression though, as we talked about it on the way home. I'd always hankered after having a convertible, I don't know why. So Pat said to me: 'Well, why don't you go for it?' I said no, because we already had the big bill for the Rover to deal with.

Pat: It was me who went back to the showroom a few days later and picked up the brochures. I am not a great car enthusiast and only want something to get me from A to B, but I felt that life is too short, and if Chris really wanted to have something like that then he should go for it. And I knew I'd get pleasure from it as well because it was a lovely car and we

would be out and about in it.

Chris: The brochures had started to whet my appetite, so we went back the following weekend and the same salesman, Patrick, came over. He said that they could do £500 off if I was interested. At that point I just gave in, and by the following Thursday it was at home in our garage.

Shortly after purchasing the car, and in a moment of pure boredom at work, I was scanning the Department of Transport registration website, and there was T600 MGF for sale at a reasonable price. That was as close to 1600 MGF as I was going to get, so it was the first accessory we bought for the car. I then learned of the MGOC at Swavesey, not too many miles from us, then Brown & Gammons, then The MGF Centre... I had joined what I think is called The Dark Side!

MGE: Had you ever talked about owning an MG, or indeed any sports car, before that?

Chris: Not at all. I knew about MG of course, but they had just never been on my radar.

Pat: Our daughters called it our mid-life crisis. They were probably right, because I was thinking that if we wanted to buy a sports car, we should do it now while we could still enjoy it.

Chris: I had this goal of retiring in 2007, and this car has really opened up a lot of doors for us to enjoy ourselves. I think Patrick mentioned the clubs to us, and we soon joined the Cambridge & District MGOC, started going to club events,





Above: The hardtop makes the MGF more suited to year-round use. Chris has added MG logos to each side.

Above right: Chris, pictured on the day he picked up his new impulse buy - 26th April, 2001.

Right: Youngest daughter Karen surprised Chris and Pat by asking to use the MGF as her wedding car in 2004.



and of course developing the MG wave – but don't you feel absolutely daft when no one returns the gesture!

Pat: We are not really clubby people in general. In the past I had joined the Young Wives or exercise clubs, that kind of thing. I did guiding for a long time too...

Chris: ... but I think the last club I belonged to must have been the youth club! However, if I get into something, I like to get really into it. So I ended up becoming more actively involved on the committee and with organising events. Last year I was elected secretary of the club, though that happened while we were away on holiday in Devon.

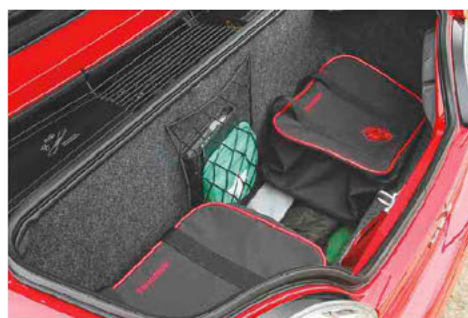
MGE: You mentioned the car opening doors to you; what did you mean by that?

Chris: Meeting people and making new friends, basically. Our first big club event was going on the Jersey Spring Rally in 2003, organised by the Jersey MGOC. In those days around 100 cars used to go over from the mainland, a whole mixture of MGs, to join about 20 island cars. It really was a very popular event, but sadly when Sandra and Jenny (who had organised it for 12 years or so) said that was enough, nobody else from the club stepped in to take over. So Geoff and Vicki Edge in Lincolnshire started organising what is now called The Jersey Weekender, and I help them where possible. We've managed to retain the sponsorship from Condor Ferries who sponsor the rally plaques and I've now got Channel Island Travel Services to sponsor the windscreen stickers, while the MGOC at Swavesey pay for all the trophies.

MGE: Talking of windscreen stickers, I did notice that you appear to have filled up the front screen and have now started on the back...

Chris: The stickers on the windscreen are all across the bottom and do not affect visibility because they only obscure your view of the wipers, but the MoT tester has made it very clear that this is as far as I can go. That's why I moved on to the back. But it is an open-topped sports car and the hardtop – with its additional stickers – will come off before we go to Jersey.

We've made many dear friends as a result of those Jersey trips over the years, but owning the MGF has even helped us meet people when we've not had it with us. For example, to celebrate my retirement we went to Canada and on an Alaskan cruise. On the ship they mixed people up at dinner, and on the first night we were taken to a table with another couple already there. They introduced themselves as Linda and Larry from the States, and when we introduced ourselves, Larry leaned over and said to his wife: 'Do you think this gentleman would get me any MG parts from England?' Given a free choice we would probably have sat down at a table on our own, but that broke the ice. Larry had an MGB GT in pieces in the garage. I left my MG magazines with him after the trip, and we kept in touch afterwards via email.



Another time we went to Italy, to Venice, on a package tour. We arrived and met this couple from Kent at breakfast in the hotel, and I asked the chap: 'What interests have you got?' He said: 'Well, I've got this MG...'

Pat: Chris couldn't help laughing at that, and Barry looked a bit startled until we explained why. Now they are dear friends that we see two or three times a year. And we've got MG friends in Wrexham who we got to know at events like Harrogate and Jersey, and others in Denmark due to our attending MG events there in the last two years.

MGE: So you have made a lot of friends from different places, and the only thing that has brought you together is owning an MG. Do you think that is just a talking point and if you had anything else in common - dogs, stamp collecting or whatever - you'd meet just as many people, or is there a certain type of person who is into MGs and it just happens to work for you?

Chris: The common link is important, but one of the things we noticed when we first joined the club is that everybody has grey hair! I think it is a bit of a generation thing, so it is easy to mix. It certainly goes beyond any individual model of MG. After all, it is not as though all the MGF owners hang out together and have nothing to do with the MGB owners, or anything like that. A lot of our friendships have sprung from Jersey, because you get to know people there and then start seeing them at other events around the country.

MGE: If we can turn to your car now, you bought a 1.6 base model, so it was quite plain though looking very smart in Solar Red. Have you done anything to the engine?

Chris: No, I haven't. I am toying with the idea of getting an ITG induction kit fitted...

Pat: That's news to me - it can be your birthday present!

Chris: ...and then getting it remapped, but that is about as far as I would go. The hardtop is a fairly recent addition. It came from a friend, Colin Freeth, who runs M.R.S Classics in Tamworth. It was originally black, but he kindly re-sprayed it

for us in Solar Red to match the car. I think the most useful accessory has been the windbreak, which we fitted early on.

Pat: We also did the seats early on. You came home with them and I was a bit surprised because you hadn't mentioned anything about them, but they are lovely.

Chris: Even now, when you look inside an MGF it is generally very bland, and ours was the most basic spec with everything in black. I'd seen the MGF Centre at various shows and knew I wanted a pair of their red and black leather seats. Victoria at the MGF Centre did me a nice deal on replacement seats and door cards to match. They also put the Trophy spoiler on the front to make the car more stable, and sprayed some of the interior details in silver - the centre of the dash, the door handles and stuff like that.

I also got some bright trim on an exchange basis from Mike Satur, and fitted chrome vents on the side intakes as well as a chrome aerial. What put me onto the chrome kick initially was seeing a bright red TC at Stoneleigh one year, with the big chrome headlamps, grille and other brightwork. I liked it, and then started seeing chrome bits for the MGF. I don't think there is any more that I would fit now though, it has just enough to make it look special, without looking over the top. At least I think so. Some people criticise what I've done and say it is over-chromed, but most people like it and compliment us on the car. I think it just gives a modern MG a bit of a link to past MGs with all their chrome grilles, bumpers etc.

MGE: I believe you once said you were not going to join the polishing brigade. Did that vow last?

Chris: Well, no. Attending the Jersey Spring Rally in the early years opened my eyes to the world of concours. Friday was always a get-together in St Hellier, and Saturday was show day. That was a big thing, and if you didn't join in you were a bit of a spare part. Mark Tossell was the man to beat in the MGF/TF class at that time. I never did beat him, because I was so green at MGs and polishing back then. Then Mark changed his MGF for a Midget, the MGF class became easier, and I won it three years on the trot - 2010, 2011 and 2012. I was delighted with that, but it was a serious mistake because then I was moved into the Prix d'honneur and found myself up against the likes

Top: Interior has been beautifully retrimmed by the MGF Centre who, along with Mike Satur, also provided some of the silver trim that lifts what can otherwise be rather a sombre MGF cabin.

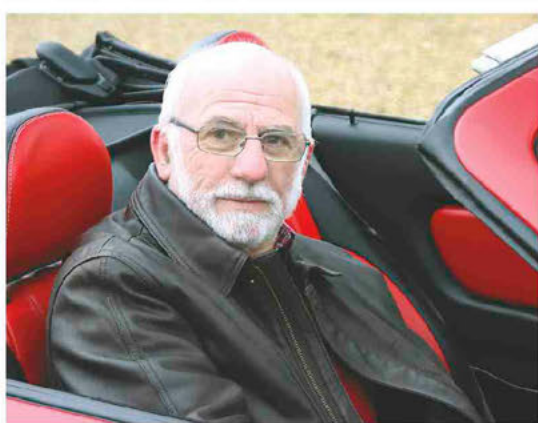
Above: No award-winning MGF should be without MG dust caps on its valves!

Above left: Bespoke bags make the most of the MGF's boot space.



Right: Chris Shurlock at the wheel of his impulse buy MGF.

Our thanks to the Grafham Water Sailing Club for use of their site for the static photos.



of Geoff Edge with his MGA and Vicki with her MGB. Obviously I didn't get anything in 2013, but we go to Harrogate most years and I have had a couple of successes up there.


MGE: Is this something you still do, or have you got it out of your system now with that hat trick of wins? I see Pat shaking her head there...

Chris: Primarily it is a car that we take to MG events, and I've got a garage wall full of rally plaques to prove it. I like to keep it clean, and if there happens to be a chance to show the car then I will do so, but that is not the prime motivation. I do not consider it to be a show car, but our 'all events' MG that I like to show. I did win at Harrogate one year, which meant a move up to the Masterclass the next. I had a word with the judge for a few pointers, and the level of detail you have to go to at that point... well, I don't want to go there, I just want to keep it clean, and show it where possible. It doesn't stop me entering, it just takes the pressure off because I know I can't win anything else. Especially now that Dean Smith has come along with his superb TF. *[As featured in the November 2014 issue – Ed]*

MGE: Has the MGF ever let you down?

Chris: No it hasn't, and we've now covered just over 40,000 miles in 14 years of ownership. We have it looked after properly though, and we had the head gasket replaced as a precaution after the experience with Pat's Rover 400. The car has also needed a new radiator and a stainless steel exhaust, but nothing else. Oh, and we have had the stainless steel underbody water pipes fitted, together with the expansion alarm tank.

MGE: So it is probably a redundant question, but did you make the right choice in giving in to your impulse all those years ago?

Chris: Yes, we certainly did. MGing is now a major part of our social life. We will keep the MGF, there is no question about that. In a fantasy world, if we had the space and the money, we would both like an MGA Roadster, and I would like a TC. That would be a nice little trio of MGs tucked away in the garage, but realistically I am simply not mechanically minded enough to take on something like a TC. For us, this MGF just ticks all of the right boxes. 



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HA'PENNY

James Kasper sought professional help when he decided to make an MGB GT look the way he thought it should. And we are talking professionals of the automotive and not the psychiatric kind, though he does point out that the opinions expressed in this feature are those of a 50-something physicist turned woodfire potter, and not necessarily those of solid, sensible MG enthusiasts!

Story and pictures: James Kasper



Part One: Mid-life cliché?

Originally it was going to be a Royal Enfield motorcycle – retro, cheap and quirky. But my wife didn't want me riding a motorcycle. With my history of injuries and clumsiness it was probably the right suggestion, but the long dormant desire for internal combustion toys was rekindled. My last 'fun' car had been a 1965 Impala SS with a 350hp 327 engine, a proper mid-70s car that was loud, fast, with flower-power paint job (courtesy of the Paint-By-Beer Company) and a project never brought to completion.

Forty years later I am less interested in going from traffic light to traffic light in milliseconds, having the sound of my exhaust drown out music I don't like, or pretending that burning rubber will attract the opposite sex. So what type of car would fit the Royal Enfield description that had rekindled my interest? Obviously a mid-century foreign sports car, but I had not paid any attention to such cars in my youth so research was in order. After many hours with single malt scotch in one hand and car photo books in the other, I finally decided on an MGB GT. Italian cars were too curvy to be timeless. German cars too pricey. Jaguars too curvy and too pricey. But the MGB GT has great classic proportions, a mix of soft curves and straight but not harsh lines, plus hatchback utility that was properly designed to the car. Also there are enough examples in the US to be both relatively cheap and readily obtained, and they have great parts availability too.



When it arrived from Florida, the MGB GT that was supposed to be a reasonable base for the project looked rather more like a parts car.



Part Two: The first mistake

Pictures may be worth a thousand words, but those words might not be about your car! Having made the BGT decision, it was off to the world's garage sale on the internet. Over the course of several months it became clear that there were three classes of cars: those in great shape, those fit only for spares, and a grey area in between. The trouble with the first category is the premium one pays knowing that changes will be coming, while the second category isn't worth the effort. The third one covers a lot of ground from 'running well but poor body' to 'not running and good body.' I settled in to find a titled car with a fair-to-good body, and accept whatever mechanicals came along without carrying a stiff premium.

The tan-ish 1972 BGT arrived from Florida to my home in eastern Iowa in January 2011. It would be tempting to blame my being crestfallen on the gloomy day, but reality was staring me in the face. While not quite a parts car, it was certainly to that end of the scale. The dent in the driver's door stopped that from working. The bonnet was a challenge to open, and once done this showed the wing edges had mostly rusted away. The carpet was well fermented, and the interior panels poor to fair. And that is not even counting the earlier repairs and the worse rust which showed up later during the restoration. But after a few days, my spirits returned. I hadn't spent so much money, and with a car this bad I could feel free to make alterations. I had fully intended to rebuild the engine

and transmission (or buy them rebuilt) to allow relaxed travel at highway speed, so not even finding that the left rear brake drum was missing a fist-sized chunk and that there were no parts past that end of the axle could put me off. Now I could replace or improve all the suspension, brakes and steering...

Part Three: A doctor and prosthetics

It wasn't until this point that planning began for purchasing parts and getting the work done. From reading a number of classic car and MG magazines I was aware of a number of shops specialising in MG work, but most of them were far from my home. It seemed better to have the work done where I could visit regularly. Noel Automotive is an auto shop about 20 minutes away. On the side they do very nice restoration work mostly on American muscle cars. I discussed the BGT with them and finally convinced them to take a look, although it didn't really fit their comfort zone. After having some time to think it over along with my commitment to getting quality parts and wanting the end result to be first class, they said yes.

The BGT was small enough to tuck out of the way in the shop to be worked on as time allowed, which was fine with me – there was no deadline to meet and it would give us more time

to ponder anything discovered during the work. A little web time and I came across MGOC in Britain for parts. I really liked the 2000cc Stage 2 engine and five-speed transmission and sent an email asking what shipping and such would be like. Thus I met Andrew Hooper, who became a great asset in helping decide the mechanical specification. But perhaps more importantly he also helped me work out the interior. It was his suggestion that while leather seats were nice, I should really stay with vinyl for the panels as it would lay tighter than leather, thus looking much better. Andrew convinced me to use the two browns that ended up in the car rather than the ones I had initially considered, and was also a great resource when things didn't quite fit or work as I had expected.

Toward the end of the project a second BGT was purchased to swap parts that were not so easy to come by, in particular some glass and window finishers. This parts car was running and in better shape than the one I had purchased to restore! It was sold along with all the extra bits once my car was done.

Part Four: Changes

I have deliberately not included a list of all the upgrades to the mechanical side, as I really think the car is more about the look. From early on the plan was for warm-white paint (Wimbledon White was used) and brown interior. I like chrome, but wanted it to sparkle rather than dazzle so the bolt-on Dayton wire wheels have matching painted spokes.

The sidelights were removed, along with the Leyland badge and antenna. Even without those, the full-length side chrome strip makes the car look heavy (probably due to the squeeze over the front wheel). Keith from the auto shop and I spent some time with a piece of trim taped to the side of the car to work out shorter lengths leading and following the door, with the ends of the chrome formed to the angle of the tail lights. The car now looks more unified – both the nose and tail are



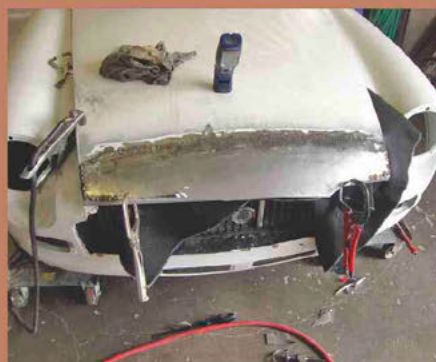
Left: 1965 Impala SS was James' last fun car, here displaying all that was tasteful about the 1970s!



On the inside, James removed the big door handles to create a little more elbow room, while the window winders mimic the Moto-Lita wheel.



“I think the clean lines give a lift to this timeless design”



A commitment to quality parts and a quality finish tempted a local bodyshop to take on the project. They put in the expertise and the time to turn James' dream into a reality. Modifications included a flatter bonnet and a hidden fuel filler.



Right: James wasn't happy with the bulk of the MGB's side trim, so he shortened the spears and designed this lovely decal to add a sense of speed to the finished look.

Below: The mechanical upgrades could fill a feature on their own, so James has stuck to the visual mods for us today. It is safe to say, however, that he will be enjoying himself on the back roads of Iowa this spring.

accentuated, and the chrome carries a 'fast' 1960s look, while allusion to the classic MGB trim is maintained. To enhance the 'rocket' look of the side trim, I designed a badge to be painted where the Leyland badge had been. The design started with a full Union flag, but that proved difficult to work with. In the end a quarter of the flag was used, streamlined to show speed but also with a false colour roadway look.

The rear of the BGT was originally well-endowed with flash. The BGT badges were removed, and following Keith's suggestion the external filler cap was removed and placed behind a push-to-release door. A US number plate doesn't fit well on the back of the original design, so the bumper was modified to hold it and the plate lights. The eye is now drawn smoothly to the end of the car, giving a lighter look.

The front end was more complex. At first I had thought about removing the outer grille ring and keeping the inner. In the end both were removed and the black insert shortened, and one older MG badge was used. The hood bump was always a little out of place in the 1970-72 BGT series which didn't have the chrome requiring it. It turned out the bump on my car was mostly filler from an old repair anyway, so the front bonnet edge was replaced with smooth metal. With these two modifications the bumper now visually stood too far from the body, so it was pulled in tight, and like the back bumper was modified to hold a US licence plate. Both bumpers lost their over-riders. The purists out there might complain, but I think the clean lines now give lift to the timeless design.

The interior was never going to be roomy, but earlier MGs had done without the arm rest door pull, and while copying that the window handles were replaced to match the Moto-Lita steering wheel. Also in the name of cleaning up the interior, the console was removed. There were issues with carpet fit if the speaker grill was removed as well, so that was blacked out behind the mesh and left in place. On the side of the grille box we fitted a power outlet. The final noticeable interior change was painting the body between the windscreen and dash in black to replace the black vinyl there that came on the car.



Part 5: On the road

In the end almost every part was replaced. Marc (from the auto shop) spent countless hours replacing metal that could not be bought, adjusting all the door and bonnet gaps, aligning the side ridge and chrome trim, and doing the necessary prep work for painting. If I were to do this over, I think I would buy a very solid BGT or perhaps a Heritage shell to start from.

Work on the car was completed too late in 2014 for me to get much kind weather road time. I'm hoping to log a fair number of local winding road miles this year. If all goes well, then perhaps I'll join in a few classic car or British car tours.

As a final note, perhaps the reader noticed the license plate, HAPENNY. It's a bit of a joke about the cost. I have two 1972 ha'pennies to mount either on the steering wheel or on the shifter. Yes, old ha'pennies were demonetized in 1969, but were last included in the 1972 British Mint collector set – a nice unintentional commemorative of a great car.



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Friends United

Friends Howard Braithwaite and John Benton moved out of their comfort zones when they decided to restore this 1934 NA Magnette.

Words and pictures: Dave Bowers



Agreeing a partnership with the objective of carrying out a shared task, such as the restoration of a 1934 MG NA Magnette in this particular case, requires a long-standing commitment to seeing the job through. However, any chance of reaching a satisfactory working relationship could have appeared doubtful in this instance, as even though Howard Braithwaite was fired up with lots of enthusiasm, his long-term friend and fellow MG aficionado, John Benton, was doubtful about taking on a car that was considerably older than anything else he had worked on up until then.

MGBs and those cars with a V8 engine are John's usual cups of tea rather than the tired looking Magnette NA four-seater that arrived at Howard's home in Prestbury, Cheshire in 2000. The car's poor appearance was made worse by a scorched bonnet, the result of a fire when petrol from the twin SU carburettor set-up had leaked out onto a hot exhaust manifold (ironically when the car was about to be photographed to establish an agreed value with the previous owner's insurance company, an incident that must have led to some most interesting correspondence!).

'I wondered what on earth Howard had let us in for,' said John. 'This was unknown territory for me. I'm more interested in modern MGs, such as the MGB V8 conversion we also jointly own. Having to deal with an ash frame body and sorting out the cable brakes was all new for me; there were times when the job looked as if it would never be finished.'

Howard was much better placed when it came to tackling a pre-war car restoration. After nailing his flag to the mast as an MG owner by buying an MGA fixed head coupé in his mid-20s, he's owned and worked on a number of Rileys, including a Sprite, Lynx, Adelphi and a Gamecock before returning to the Octagon with a couple of MGBs, a Midget and three MGAs he rebuilt with John lending a hand. The last MGA was sold after Howard became dissatisfied with its motorway performance, a complaint that should not be levied against his latest MG – an MGC in the rare factory colour of Riviera Silver Blue Metallic that he is re-commissioning at present.

Howard explained how the NA Magnette came their way, saying: 'I was interested in an MG VA which a priest we knew happened to mention, but it turned out this had already been sold, so he put us onto the Magnette. I contacted a lady called

Margot Coates (née Buckley) of Stoke on Trent, who'd been given the car as a 21st birthday present by her brother in 1971. It was complete, but only just hanging together. The engine was terribly smokey and it hardly had any power at all, but I could see it had potential. The attraction for me was that the NA Magnette was the last MG featuring the 1271cc, overhead camshaft engine in which Cecil Kimber always delighted.'

Some copies of old correspondence came with the car, and Cecil Kimber's signature was recorded on a letter of 4th September 1935 to the Magnette's first owner, Mrs B Markham of 22 Clifton Court, St. John's Wood. This was in reply to her letter regarding the poor performance of her car's SU fuel pump, which Kimber went on to explain was a fault some other car manufacturers also experienced due to the issue of a faulty batch. The letter went on to suggest the local MG service depot at University Motors of 105 Cheyne Walk should be contacted to inspect a fault with the car's cellulose paint that had developed since she bought it on 22nd May 1934. Always a keen promoter of MG products, Kimber rather boldly pushed his luck by suggesting: 'Look forward to seeing you at Olympia where the new car will interest you very much.' Perhaps this was a veiled reference to the new MG SA introduced in the following year?

There were two other letters in the car's file. In one, H F Clewley of the Service Parts Department wrote to advise B G Russell of Brighton on 4th June 1946 that it was no longer possible to supply a pair of replacement Bakelite dashboard light covers. In the second, H M Rummings (also of the Service Parts Department) was able to assure the car's next owner, Anthony Clark of Wrexham, on 12th November 1946 that a replacement crown wheel and pinion he had ordered some time ago was about to be despatched.

Finding replacement parts for pre-war MGs in the post-war period often proved difficult, as reflected by the adoption of the Ford sidevalve as an alternative engine by many desperate owners. But John had cultivated an impressive network of contacts through his employment with the Stockport branch of MG specialist Moss Europe, and also as a founder member of the South Manchester MG Owners' Club. He also had some

Below: A viable project when it arrived, the results of an engine fire were visible on the bonnet. It was then subjected to a total strip down and rebuild.





Below:
The interior
has been
painstakingly
put back to
original spec,
with proper NA
dials and a
quality retrim.
It was always
the intention
to build it as a
two-seater
body rather
than four.

luck. For example, after scouring autojumbles up and down the land for an MG NA gearbox knob, a house clearance specialist turned up on John's doorstep with a van load of spares and sticking out of the pile, still attached to a working gearbox, was this badly sought item. Naturally John bought the lot, which in turn attracted a horde of MMM owners on the lookout for a bargain! His association with Moss also paid dividends as although they no longer supply parts for cars of the NA's vintage, John managed to obtain a new firewall that was still in stock off the shelves, a most lucky find.

Two MG fans who are no longer with us proved most helpful in the restoration. The late Mike Ellis kindly allowed Howard and John to measure up his car as details of the two front seats were needed to replace those taken from an Austin 7 at some time in the past. They only needed the two front seats, as it was never their intention to reinstate the original four-seater body. They felt this body style lacked symmetry when seen from the rear, so a replacement two-seater body was proposed. Mike also assisted by providing various spare parts and measurement details of the wooden structure on the body of his own two-seater car, which his son still has today.

The late Terry Andrews also came up trumps by loaning out the actual body tub of his two-seater car, which Mike Ellis transported up from Kent. This allowed specialist bodybuilder, Alwyn Lee Coachbuilders of Telford, to copy the design and make an identical new body tub.

The spluttering engine heard on day one sealed a decision to go for a full engine rebuild, work that Tom Dark Engineering took on. They started off with a new engine block, but as these replica engine blocks were built as a batch for racing owners, so Tom had to convert it from K-Type to the required NA configuration. The engine was then built up using all new parts where necessary.

Turning to the bodywork, Howard commented: 'After attending a car restoration course at Openshaw College, I rebuilt the front wings by letting in new metal where needed, and I built a set of rear wings from bare metal. Norman Isles of Pott Shrigley in Cheshire made the new bonnet tops together with other metalwork, although we managed to reuse the bonnet side panels.'

Norman re-panelled the doors and also the rear of the bodywork, his *tour de force* being to realign the swage line on



each side of the car so that this completes an unbroken line from the A-post in a curve across the doors such that it would meet the centre of the rear wire wheel spinner if its course wasn't cut short along the leading edge of the rear wheelarch. Unlike the car in its original form where the line across the surface of the door failed to align with the join line in between the side and the top panels of the bonnet, this line is now continuous. This detail was then highlighted by a duo-tone paint job with black used above the line and the mudguards, and ivory for the lower sections.

Specialist help also came from an unlikely source in Progress Aero Works of Macclesfield, who normally make tiny engines for model aircraft. However, they welcomed the opportunity of making up a set of new kingpins, as well as many new stainless steel parts such as the securing side struts for the bonnet sides. A mutual friend, Vernon Smith, was asked to do any electrical works. He fitted a new wiring loom and cleverly adapted the wiring in the fuse box to incorporate a modern regulator, updating the dynamo to a two-brush design that improved efficiency. These modifications make the car more usable, but are indiscernible from the outside.

'We had to have all the leaf springs replaced,' remarked Howard, 'which are underslung on the rear axle. This was done by a firm called Jones Springs Engineering of Darlaston in the West Midlands. We reused the original shock absorbers, Andre Hartford on the front and Luvax at the back, but we found the two front wheels were non-original. These were centre laced, and did not have outer laced spokes like the rear ones, so we bought two replacement wheels from Bob Brassington, another enthusiast who's sadly passed away since then. All four wheels were sandblasted, powder coated and painted at the same time.'

Howard recalled with fondness one telephone conversation with Sports and Vintage of Shropshire, which was music to his ears after having to painstakingly track down so many parts over weeks if not months before they were forthcoming. 'I asked: "Have you got any brake cables for an MG NA?" "Certainly, sir, do you want a full set?" to which my answer was: "Yes, but how long will these take to arrive?" The reply was: "I'll deliver them by post tomorrow!"



The possibility of following the lead of the vintage MG racing fraternity and fitting Wolseley hydraulics to the braking system had been considered as a way to improve braking effort, although this idea was ultimately discarded on the grounds of maintaining originality. 'After servicing the brakes, we took the chassis off the ground to adjust the cable brakes, the rears and then the fronts, minutely adjusting until the shoes started to catch the drums,' said Howard. 'This exercise was then repeated when the brakes had had a chance to bed in properly.'

By the time the engine arrived back from Tom Dark's workshop near Witney, the gearbox was also ready to be installed. This had been sent to KE Transmissions of Wolverhampton for an inspection, with authority to carry out whatever work was needed. In the event it was declared to be in

Above: The Magnette is powered by a little jewel of an engine, a 1271cc six cylinder OHC unit fed by two SU carbs.





Above: John has yet to sample the pleasures of driving the pre-war Magnette, but Howard says it compares very favourably to the Rileys he once owned.

good shape, though all the bearings were changed simply as a matter of course. Once the engine and gearbox had been relocated back in the chassis, Howard rebuilt the twin SU carburettors with all the new parts being available from the Burlen, the SU specialists.


What to do about the ugly arrangement of two independent and non-original electrical wiper motors being fitted to the top rail of the windscreen became a long drawn out issue, as the top rail had been butchered to fit this arrangement in a way that couldn't be rectified. But the Beaulieu Autojumble came up trumps when Howard and John found a new windscreen top rail, possibly off a Railton model, which they cut to size to match the shorter NA screen. This was fitted with a single windscreen wiper of the correct type to the top rail on the passenger side, with slave operation working the wiper on the driver's side. Another fortunate autojumble find was an original walnut veneer dashboard instrument panel for £25. The original dashboard had been messed about with to fit a set of later MG VA instruments, which were no longer required. John Marks of Vintage Restorations was happy to take in the

“There's that lovely sound of the straight-cut gear cogs”

VA instruments as part payment towards the correct type of rev counter for an NA Magnette. The other NA instruments were supplied by the ever-helpful Mike Ellis.

Mike Greenbank of Grangeway, Elworth, Sandbach, a Rolls Royce trained upholsterer who now works for himself, was asked to re-trim the replacement seats as well as the hood and tonneau. He also did the door panels, which incorporate a leather embossed sunburst pattern (as per the originals) that is so evocative of the 1930s.

Although the factory-issued instructions recommended just the one caster wedge under the front springs to change the angle that the axle sits at, Howard followed alternative advice and fitted two wedges on each side which made the steering that much more positive. The headlights and radiator surround were re-chromed by Derby Chrome Plating, who did a nice job. But when Howard was refitting the surround to the radiator, it fell off the bench and sustained a nasty dent which cost an eye-watering £200 to put right again. It was money well spent though, because although the car was only completed part way through last year, it took Car of the Show at the Capesthorne Classic Car Show on 24th August 2014, and was also the Car of the Show at the Footman James Classic Car Show held in Manchester in September.

John has yet to drive the Magnette as he was rather put off by the reverse positioning of the gears in a non-synchromesh gearbox, so Howard finished off the interview with a resume of what this car was like to drive in its present, fully refurbished condition. 'It takes me right back to the early Rileys which I once owned,' he said. 'There's that lovely sound of the straight cut gear cogs. The only thing you have to watch out for is that although folk give a car like this plenty of respect, it's a real worry when someone nicks your braking distance by cutting in front of you. At present, we've only done 300 miles and I don't intend overdoing things below 1000 miles to allow the engine to run in properly, but it is plenty of fun, even when the self-imposed speed limit is set at about 50-55mph!' 

Beryl Markham

Preparing an article such as this is normally a one-way process where interesting facts are obtained from the owner of a car and then prepared for publication. However, on this particular occasion recognising the name Mrs B Markham suggested to me something of significance that the owners didn't know about at all. Maybe this MG NA Magnette could have once had a very famous owner, a pioneer aviator of renown, or an aviatrix to provide the somewhat outdated female alternative title.

Checking out the address on the letter sent by Kimber in 1935 suggested maybe Beryl Markham was the owner of the NA back then; a woman who was born in England but who grew up in Kenya where she

learnt to fly as a bush pilot identifying big game for safari hunters. Beryl eventually moved back to England, and in 1936 she achieved the formidable accomplishment of becoming the first woman to fly east to west across the Atlantic - rounding off this solo achievement by crash landing in Nova Scotia after her single engined Vega Gull monoplane

suffered fuel starvation when the fuel tank vents froze over.

Always known for her unconventional approach to life, Beryl went on to create a new career as a horse trainer, which she pursued with customary vigour up to her death at the age of 84 in 1986.

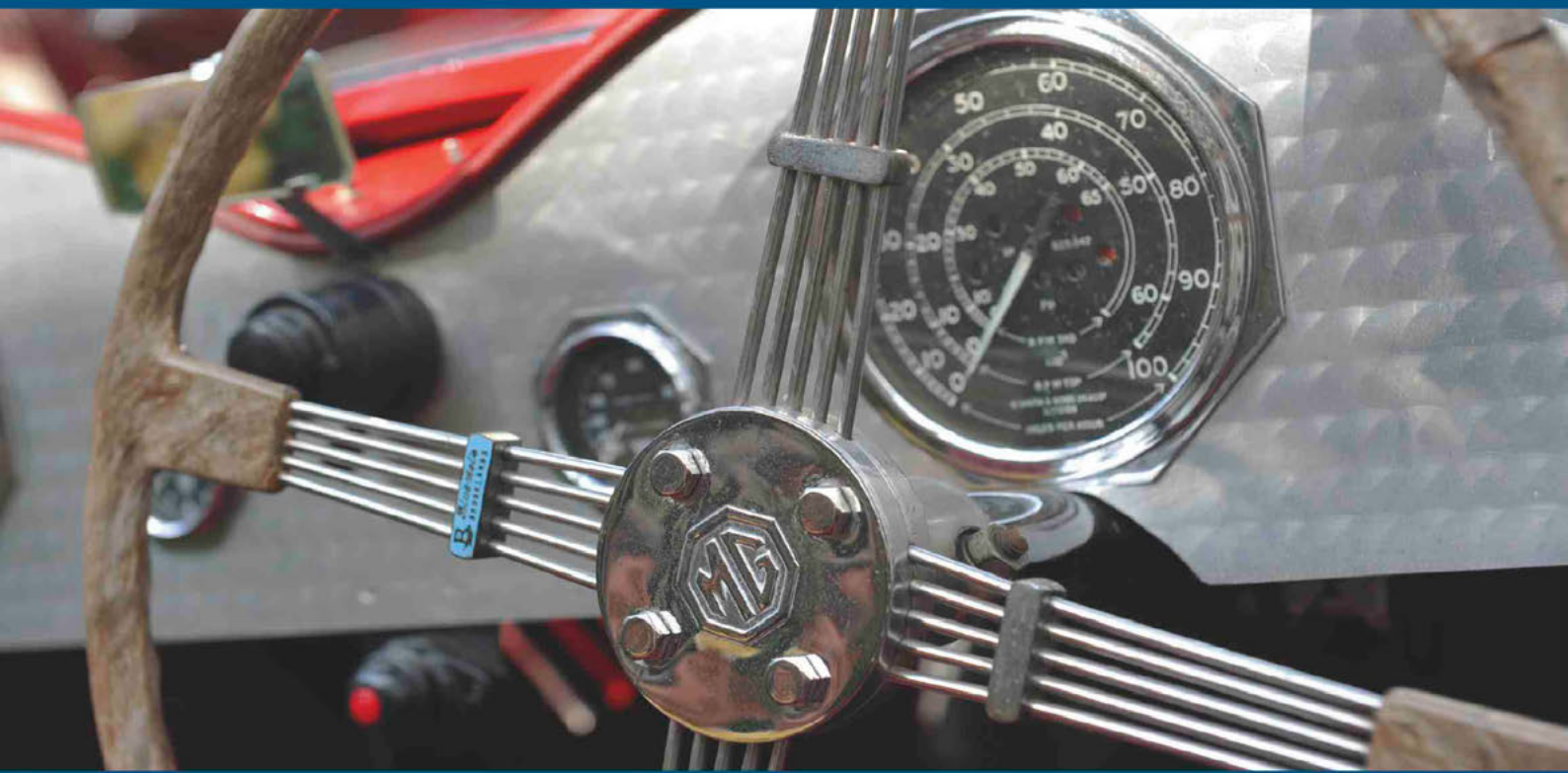
No surviving accounts have been found of what she thought of the NA

other than what Cecil Kimber referred to in his letter of 14th September 1935 concerning the fuel pump and paintwork, although in common with Beryl's spirited approach to training horses and riding as well as flying small aircraft over immense distances, we have little doubt it would have been taken to the limit on every possible occasion!



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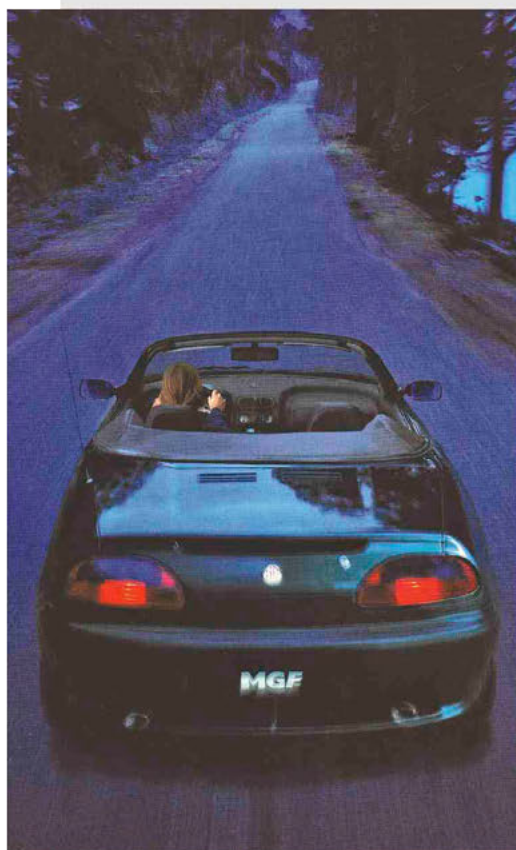
From the archives...

Paul Guinness delves into his MG archives to bring you another great mix of brochures, ads and paraphernalia...

TF MEETS ITS ANCESTOR

In a celebratory brochure issued in 2004 to mark the 80th anniversary of MG and the centenary of Rover, the latest MG TF understandably received plenty of coverage. But in true MG fashion, the brochure didn't just major on the new TF's many plus points, but also pitched it against its ancestor of the same name. Yes, playing the heritage card has been a feature of MG marketing for a long, long time – and things were no different during MG-Rover's penultimate year.

The classic in question was a 1955 TF1500, which had been owned by MG fanatic Adrian Reid since 1968. *'I bought it from a chap in Oxfordshire,'* Adrian was quoted as saying, *'where it was just sitting in a field.'* The price paid was £285, and Adrian then used the car as his everyday transport through to the mid-1970s. Needless to say, both the classic TF and its brand new namesake were given a rapturous review by the brochure copywriters.



FARBEN UND POLSTER

You don't need to be fluent in German to hazard a guess that *'Farben und Polster'* simply translates to '*colours and upholstery*' in English. In the case of this particular brochure, the wording appears above images of different-coloured MGFs, below which are various upholstery options which kind of gives the game away. If, however, you still haven't guessed, we're talking here about a brochure for the German-spec MGF – albeit a very early one, dated August 1995. And considering that the entire brochure was written in German, it perhaps seems odd that the colour choices remained in English – which explains the inclusion of such hues as White Diamond and Volcano Orange. Surely, though, German buyers would have been happier being offered *Weißer Diamant* and *Vulkan Orange* instead? Then again, maybe not.





Prepárese para impresionar - no importa cual sea su destino.

Al igual que usted, a este deportivo le encantan las carreteras abiertas. Pero también el barullo de las vías urbanas. La versatilidad es la clave de la vida moderna y la simple adición de una capota opcional en el color de la carrocería significa que su MG TF estará instantáneamente equipado para superar las más duras pruebas urbanas.

La poderosa aceleración a bajas velocidades y los potentes frenos garantizarán su seguridad durante el trayecto a la oficina, mientras que el elegante y sofisticado diseño del MG TF y sus dimensiones compactas despertarán pasiones a su paso.

Características admisiones de aire laterales, exclusivo frontal con cuatro ranuras, faros halógenos con proyectores, sutil spoiler con tercera luz de freno y doble tubo de escape metálico – el MG TF parece y es tan bueno en ciudad como deslizándose en la noche con equipaje para dos. Los fines de semana empiezan aquí...

Los deportivos acostumbran a exigir sacrificios. Ya no.



GET READY TO IMPRESS

Another European-market MG brochure, this one dates from early 2005 and was designed to tempt a Spanish audience into buying the latest TF – shown here in hardtop guise despite the favourable Spanish climate. As for the wording of the brochure, the emphasis was on style and sportiness: 'Prepárese para impresionar - no importa cual sea su destino,' shouted the headline. And translated to English? It simply suggested that TF drivers should prepare to impress, no matter where their destination might be. Sounds about right, doesn't it?

ENGINES 5.

Introducing the new K4 2-litre. New for 2004 is the K4 2-litre which has been developed in conjunction with Judd – the engine specialists with a long list of successes in World Sports Car and Inducar racing. This power unit is revealed in road car form at the Autosport Show in the new ultra high performance MG ZS – the ZS X-Flow 215. The 2-litre capacity is achieved by increasing both the bore and the stroke of a 1.8 K. This, plus some very special work in the cylinder head to allow a large increase in gas flow rate, gives a naturally aspirated engine capable of over 190hp per litre at only 7000 rpm with a very wide spread of torque. In an exploratory outing at the Thruxton circuit of the Silver and Essex championships in October 2003, this engine in an otherwise identical ZS overtook race cars, comfortably won the 2-litre class with what was basically a road engine. During 2003, further developments of this engine will however be available, and in race trim expect at least 250hp @ 5000rpm.

The initial engine specification which has road car drivability, refinement and durability, and is 20k emissions compliant, is as follows:

K4 2-litre
Tubed, cross-drilled crankshaft
Large bore (82.5mm) cylinder stems
Gas flows, 14 or 16 valve cylinder head
High lift camshafts
High speed tappets
Muffler exhaust
Forged 3 mg pistons
Compression ratio: 11.0:1
Alumina throttle body
Separated gearbox
High flow injectors
4 valve drive
Lightweight fuel pump
2700psi @ 7000rpm and 170 lb torque
PRICE: for a complete engine excluding clutch and exhaust manifold. From - 13895.00



K4 1.8 litre competition engine
This power unit was developed by MG Sport & Racing in conjunction with Powertrain Limited for the 2003 24 hour water race series. It was designed to be a fast but very driveable engine capable of completing a whole season's racing without rebuild. It's based on the 20120 non-VVC engine, but uses the VVC big valve, large port cylinder head and an air flow vent as a replacement for most racing increases in its kit installation. ie ZS, ZS TF, Elva, Cabriolet etc. Details are as follows:

Concession crankshaft
Large port cylinder head
20120 16mm 16 camshafts
Solid tappets
Forged pistons
Fuel injectors
Rear pipes and front filter induction system
150hp @ 7000rpm

PRICE: for a complete engine, dyno tested, including 200mm jump clutch and lightweight flywheel. 13895.00



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K4 K-SERIES UPGRADE

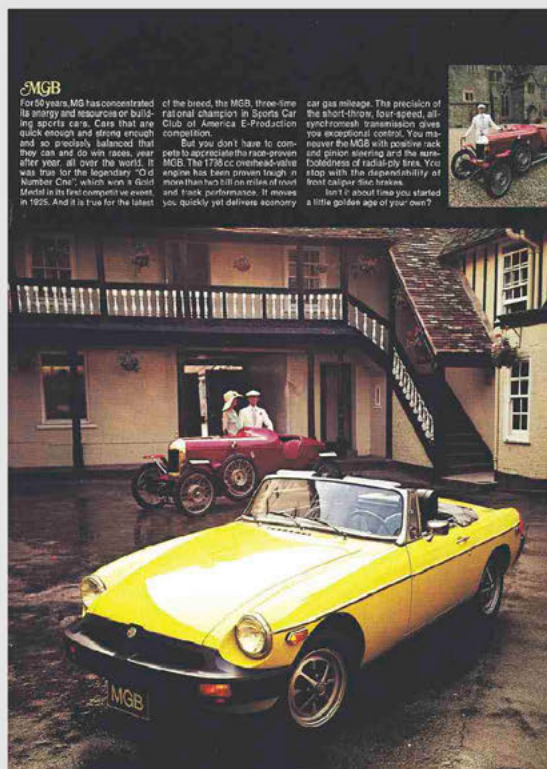
MG Sport & Racing issued a new brochure in January 2004 to promote its impressive array of performance and handling upgrades for the Z-car range. And for anyone seeking a heft of extra power, they needed to turn to this particular page featuring the 2.0-litre K4 engine, derived from the familiar 1.8 K-series. With increased bore and stroke, plus a modified cylinder head, the K4 2-Litre (as it was officially known) pushed out 210Ps of power at 7000rpm, along with 170lb.ft of torque. This latest engine was being revealed in road car form at that year's Autosport Show, and was expected to attract plenty of attention, even if its official list price of £8895 might have seemed budget-busting to many potential buyers.

THE GOLDEN AGE CONTINUES

We mentioned this brochure a couple of issues back, but this time we focus on arguably its two most important pages. Published in late 1974 to commemorate MG's 50th anniversary and to promote the company's new black-bumper look to an American audience, it

was another one to successfully pay tribute to MG heritage, with the inside pages each showing one of the latest models with a classic predecessor in the background. Oh, and to round out the theme rather neatly, the older cars were accompanied by various folk in period dress.

What you see here are the sections devoted to the latest American-spec Midget and MGB, the former a fitting successor to the original: 'In 1929, MG introduced the MG Midget, a production sports-racing car,' explained the brochure, before describing the 1975-model Midget as 'the best one yet.' As for the MGB, this was photographed in front of Old Number One, with MG claiming that the latest 'B' was 'proven tough in more than two billion miles of road and track performance.' By way of conclusion, MG's marketing folk simply asked: 'Isn't it about time you started a little golden age of your own?'





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Plastic MGAs from Germany

One of the great things about the collecting hobby is that no matter how long you've been involved in it, there's always a new discovery to make.

By Andrew Ralston



While the history of mainstream toy and model companies – Dinky, Corgi, Matchbox and so on – has been thoroughly researched over the years, there remain many obscure corners of the toy industry about which information has yet to surface. However, German enthusiast Ernst Plattner is the acknowledged expert on the numerous different ranges of plastic cars made in Germany in the 1960s. He publishes a specialist magazine on the subject called *Epoche Modellautoheft* and his encyclopaedic knowledge has enabled the makers of many hitherto unknown models to be identified, among them the two simple MGA models pictured below.

The blue hardtop is unusual because, well, it's a hardtop whereas most MGA models are based on roadsters. At just 7cm in length, it's about 1/60 in scale, putting it partway between HO model railway size and the standard 1/43 diecast scale used on larger model cars. The MGA consists of nothing more than a rather brittle, almost translucent plastic body clipped onto two axles. But who made it? The only markings underneath are the letters 'MG' which don't take us very far, but a grainy photo in a catalogue issued in 1958 by Behringer, a Nurnberg toy wholesaler, shows that the model belongs to a set of six contemporary sports coupés, the others being a Fiat, Jaguar XK, Austin Healey, Porsche and Mercedes. These were so simple



Four of the six plastic coupés, shown here with two racing cars. The MG is fourth from the left. How many of the others can you identify before reading this page?

and cheap that they weren't sold individually, but as a set attached to a backing card along with six road signs. Ernst Plattner reckons the maker is Jean Höfler, whose origins go back to a family firm founded in Furth in 1923. The company's development is rather complex, with different family members going their separate ways and later merging their efforts. In the post-war era, Höfler products moved away from the use of traditional tinplate material and many cheap plastic toys – especially vehicles and cowboy and Indian figures – were produced, with the name Jean being used as a trademark from 1970 onwards.

The second model pictured, a green roadster, is slightly larger, being just under 8cm long. Again, it's a very basic item – it doesn't even have a windscreen, though seats and steering wheel are moulded as part of the body. There is, however, a name underneath, Eri, but this is not

the maker of the toy. Eri is in fact a German brand of shoe polish, and it was the custom at one time for cheap plastic toys of this kind to be given away as promotional items to children in shoe shops, perhaps as a reward (or bribe) to ensure good behaviour when their feet were being measured for a new pair of school shoes! There are plenty of different plastic cars of this type and they're very popular among German collectors, though little known elsewhere. Ernst considers the likely manufacturer to have been a firm called Rex, an associate of the better known Karl Arnold company which was founded in Nurnberg in 1906.

Though you will probably need to look to a German source to find them, these simple little MGAs are not particularly rare or expensive. Up till now, they've been a bit of a mystery. However, thanks to our German contact the picture has now become a bit clearer!



Above and inset: Open MGA is marked 'Eri' underneath.

Below: This simple plastic MGA from Germany is unusual as it represents the coupé.





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THE DIGITAL AGE

Jeff Patterson's Zircon Blue Montego is believed to be the only survivor with the early digital talking dash still on the road. He tells us about the car, and why he holds the entire Montego range in such high regard.



I got my first Montego in the 1980s, trading in a C-reg Rover 216 Vanden Plas for a D-reg MG Montego. There was no special reason why I did this because the Rover was a good car, I just liked the look of the Montego. And I wasn't disappointed with how it drove, it really was a great car. Then I bought an F-plate MG Montego Turbo with a crushed sill from a breakers yard for £500 – I repaired that and did 172,000 miles in it.

I rack up the miles pretty quickly because I am a stock taker and drive all over the country to jobs, generally doing about 50,000 miles a year. I've been doing this for over 30 years now, but I've never had a new car or anything on finance, and the Montegos gave great service. I did once buy a diesel Montego from the breakers yard for a couple of hundred pounds and put all my MG bits on it. (My brother had one and did the same, but he put MG badges on as well.)

Unfortunately it wasn't a good car – the engine was just tired, very smelly and smokey. I ran that one for about nine months before selling it on.

When the Montegos got too old to use for work, I switched to Mondeos. Finally in 2004 I bought a black Monty Turbo knowing it was now going to be a play car rather than a frontline driver. Then somebody said to me: 'You know when you have one, you always need another...?' I didn't want to go down that route, but I once had as many as seven at the same time. I hadn't gone actively looking for any of them, but once you have one, then others seem to find you.

Or you find them. For example, I saw an early C-reg car in Moonraker Blue on eBay. It didn't sell, so I went down to see the bloke and bought it. I didn't tell my wife about it, but while we were in Dubai celebrating our 25th wedding anniversary, I said: 'Oh, by the way, we've got to pick a car up on the way home...' We got delayed 19 hours at Dubai airport, so we had been up all that time and had to drive down to Newhaven to





pick this car up. I eventually restored it, and later sold it to my son and that is how he got into Montegos.

The most I've ever paid for a Montego was £2000. That was for a G-reg Montego Turbo facelift, and I only had it a week before it got written off. What happened was that I parked outside a shop, went in to get a paper, came back out and there was a Morris Marina embedded in the back of it. I never saw the Montego again. Such a shame as it was a lovely car.

The cheapest bargain I had was my first talking dash one for which I paid £300, and that came with brand new front wings fitted. This was in the early 1990s. You could pick them up for nothing in those days, and still get the panels. That's how I learnt to fix them. I've always done my own car repairs.

This car we're in today is Zircon Blue. It is a 1984 car, August 1984. I got it after a bloke had posted on the Maestro.org forum asking for help fixing his car, saying none of the electrics worked. I offered to help, but then he said he didn't really want the car and asked if I wanted to buy it. So I drove down to Bristol, saw that it was basically in good condition and knowing that I can fix electrics anyway, I bought it.

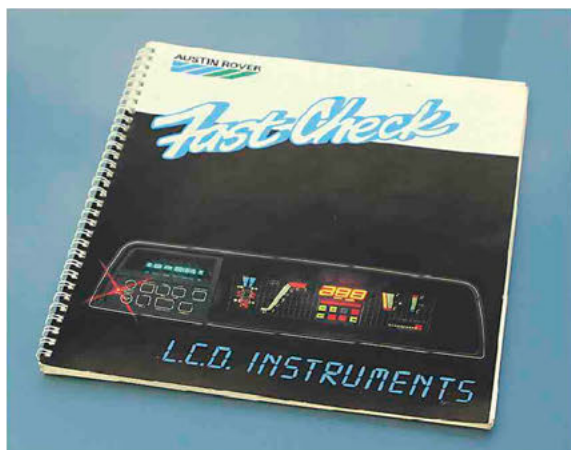
The car only had 22,000 miles on the clock. It wouldn't start, but I jump-started it from my diesel and it fired up fine. It

needed a bit of work, but it was a really, really quiet engine. He had been asking for £2000, but I got it for £700. A friend picked it up for me with his trailer and took it to his barn in Wetherby. I didn't get to see the car for another two months. Then I started finding out what was wrong with it. I took the dashboard out completely, cleaned up the connections, replaced a relay and a couple of wires that had gone and then it sprang to life. It has an awful lot of wires, but that doesn't worry me. I've rewired cars in the past, taken looms out of one Montego and put them into another so I know what I am looking at. If it was a newer car then I would be a bit lost, but I've learnt over the years what goes where on a Montego.

Being an early car, this one has the digital dash that proved unpopular at the time and was quickly dropped in favour of more traditional analogue dials. The digital dash is a lovely period item, but to be honest you can't see what it is telling you most of the time during daylight as it is not bright enough. They only made the digital dash for nine months, but now it is the thing to have. There are only four left that we know of, and this is the only one on the road. I also have a red Montego with the digital dash that is being restored, my friend has had one from new but his has been stored for years after a crash, and somebody came up to us at the NEC show last year to say that he has one he's also had from new.

The best known feature of the digital dash is that a synthesized voice reads out any warnings – door open, bonnet or boot open, low on oil, bulbs out and so on. The voice belongs to actress Nicolette McKenzie, and was a bit of a novelty rather than being really useful. When I had my first one in the early 1990s, every time I switched it on she would tell me that the car required a service. Every time. Back then I didn't know how to reset it, but now I do – I've got a book that tells you everything, including the combination of buttons to reset the service interval. I've also got a FastCheck tool for the dash which checks everything in it. This is a plug-in tool, but you have to take the dash binnacle out to find the plug-in socket – not the most user-friendly set-up, but that is just how they did it. There are a surprising number of these tools around and you can get them for £20 or so because they are only good for the one model. They won't even fit a Maestro as those have

Above: The digital display is small by modern standards – it is in the binnacle to the left of the main instrument cluster and above the heater vents. Unlike back seat drivers, it can be silenced at the push of a button.



“ The best known feature of the digital dash is that a synthesized voice reads out any warnings ”

different connections; good old British Leyland.

Some spare parts for the Montego are now getting hard to come by. Panels, for example – since Hadrian went out of business, you can't get sills any more. There were a couple of cover sills on eBay recently that went for £50 each, and I've got a proper full sill from MG-Rover tucked away in my stash of spares. I could get £120 for that, which is still not a lot of money, but prices are beginning to go up.

Not that you need too many panels on a Montego. They rust at the backs of the sills, all around the rear arches, the bottom of the doors, and there is a box section at the back of the sill where it meets the arches that rots. The fronts of the sills go as well, but that is basically it and at least they all go in the same places. You can buy arch repair panels, while sills can generally be patched as they mostly go at the bottom and that is no reason to keep the car off the road. You can get three of the doors secondhand, but drivers doors are getting scarce now. Sadly the values of the cars are still too low to justify remanufacture of these panels. A Turbo or a talking dash car is worth a bit, but an Austin or Rover 1.6L Montego can be yours for about £400. You could pick up a reasonable car for £700 if you are not after one of the top specs, but really nice cars can go for £4000 or more. Prices are finally increasing, creeping up to £1100 or £1200 for a good one, which is still a lot of car for the money. The estates are always worth more; you are looking at about £1000+ for one of those.

Talking of different Montego models, outsiders always want the MG because it commands the most money, but there are plenty of enthusiasts in the club who want a 1.3 Maestro (which are pretty common) or who are after a 1.3 Montego which are both very rare and very underpowered – it is the rarity that makes them desirable. And the 1980s are coming back into fashion now. All you get is: 'My dad had one of those...' It used to be the 1970s, but now it is the 1980s.

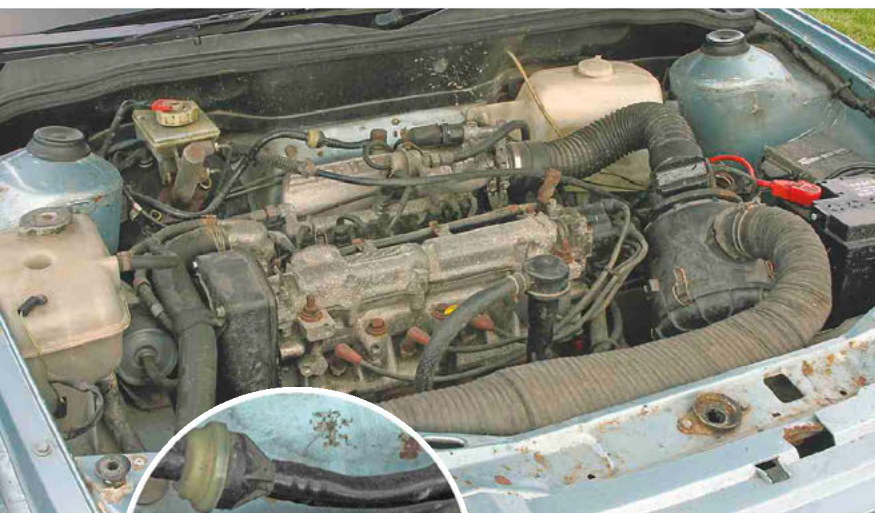
And everybody wants the Turbo – an MG Montego Turbo is definitely top of the tree. The Turbos are not the most reliable though, and having driven so many different models, if I had a straight choice between an EFi and a Turbo, with all other things being equal I'd pick the EFi. If you leave a Turbo for any length of time, the carburettor tends to get clogged up. But

behind the wheel it is a different matter – the Turbo is a completely different animal to drive. When you go round corners... well it doesn't really go round corners, does it? You have to lower it for that because in standard form it leans a lot. If you have a good one, then it is a lot of fun, but they are 30 years old now and things like vacuum pipes are starting to go. With the EFi, you just turn the key and off you go. You have to keep on top of a Turbo more, maintain it and drive it regularly.

The EFi is much slower than the Turbo, though. You are talking four seconds of difference on the 0-60mph, and that is a lot. But you get to 2500rpm and the turbo kicks in. It just gives you a bit of extra grunt. When you go to overtake somebody, you don't have to change down a gear, you just step on the gas. My Turbo will keep up with the V6 ZS180 I've got sitting on the drive out there up to about 95mph. The EFi is more progressive, so an easier and in some ways a lazier drive. Don't get me wrong though because it was a fast car in its day, but engines have come on so much since then that today a 1.2 Corsa will beat it from a standing start.

Below: Jeff Patterson used to drive Montegos for work, covering 50,000 miles a year. He is still driving them, but these days it is purely for pleasure.





Above: The MG Turbo is top of the Montego tree, but Jeff reckons that the EFI is more practical and still a creditable performer.

This car has just come back from the paint shop, having a few rust spots tarted up. I've already replaced the headlining in it, which can be a tricky job. They used three different types of backing material, and some of the early ones are little more than cardboard. If you have a sunroof it is fine, but without that the lining starts to sag. You can recover them because usually it is only the foam that has gone, while the material and the backing are usually OK. You can get it out of the car through the front door without having to take the window out, just remove the headrests and lay the seats down flat.

One thing you can't get any more is the material for the seats, which is why I always buy rotten cars if the interior is good. What makes the difference between a car I will restore and one that I will break is the condition of its body. I don't weld (though I plan to learn), so there are certain things that I can't really repair. For example the fuel filler pocket rots from the inside out, and the car has to be totally stripped to repair that. But you can get good bits off the worst of cars. I bought a black Turbo for £60 a while back that had been standing in a field for years. It was completely rotten, but I got a wiring loom, the

engine, a complete interior and headlining biscuit – some bits I kept and used, others I sold on.

I know the Montegos used to be looked down upon in some quarters, but I've never had any problem with that. I am in the MG Car Club, the Maestro and Montego OC, and the Boston Classic Car Club as well. I am quite lucky with the local MGCC Centre in that its members have always had a variety of cars and I've never encountered any snobbishness at all. Even at the NEC with the Maestro and Montego OC this last November, it was the same as any other car – you get horror stories from some people complaining that 'the damn thing never worked and it rusted away,' but others remember what a great car theirs was. You take as you find. It doesn't bother me one bit if a bloke likes my car or not. I like it, and that is all that matters to me. I am old enough not to worry what people think about me. If I was a young bloke I might get upset if people rubbished my car, but I am too old and too ugly to worry.

Jeff pushed the appropriate buttons on the digital dash so that it cycled through its check procedure, and these are the possible faults the Nicolette McKenzie voiced for our listening pleasure:

- ✗ Warning. A fault has been detected. Pull over and have the oil level checked. Please refer to the vehicle's handbook.
- ✗ Have the alternator checked. Please refer to the vehicle's handbook.
- ✗ Warning. The parking brake is still on.
- ✗ A lamp has failed. Please see the vehicle map.
- ✗ Warning. A fault has been detected. Have the brake fluid level checked. Please refer to the vehicle's handbook.
- ✗ The boot is still open.
- ✗ Warning. A fault has been detected. Pull over and have the cooling system checked. Please refer to the vehicle's handbook.
- ✗ Have the brake pads checked.
- ✗ Warning. A door is open. Please see the vehicle map.
- ✗ Have the engine oil topped up.
- ✗ Have the washer fluid topped up.
- ✗ Have the coolant level topped up.
- ✗ The fuel level is low.
- ✗ A service is now required. Please refer to the vehicle's handbook.
- ✗ The lights are still on.
- ✗ Low temperature; look out for ice.
- ✓ All monitored functions are working correctly.



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Power steering, Alloy Wheels 26k mls **£4,900**



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A decade in review

Ten years ago, MG-Rover went into administration and the Longbridge gates were closed. **Martin Williamson** looks back over the following decade of highs and lows and pulls no punches to give his assessment of where MG is today – and where it might be in ten years time.



April 2005 is a month indelibly printed on the minds of enthusiasts of both MG and Rover cars. As the dust settled on MG-Rover's demise, some enthusiasts replaced their cars from the sale of stock, convinced this was their last chance to buy a new example of their favourite marque. For fans of Rover this has since turned out to be the case, the Rover badge now being stored at the back of a Tata cupboard. But what of the MG brand? Oddly, the man in the street knows the Chinese now own the badge, but isn't aware they are back in the UK and for sale, which probably reflects the poor sales numbers.

Before looking at the present and into the future, let's clarify the events of the last decade. In 2004 Shanghai Automotive Industry Corp (SAIC) bought the Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) to the Rover 25 and Rover 75. With a team of engineers on secondment from MG-Rover, SAIC began work on a replacement

Rover 45 and updated Rover 75 that would benefit both parties. However, MG-Rover needed more money and, according to various sources, the Chinese government were prepared to back a joint venture if the UK government of the day would also back the deal to the tune of £150 million. But the UK government decided not to, ultimately leading to closure of Longbridge and the loss of 6000 direct jobs.

Naturally many assumed that SAIC had engineered the situation in order to buy the business without any financial baggage. The administrators, Price Waterhouse Cooper, put the assets of the business up for auction and SAIC were there in the bidding, along with several rank outsiders. The winning bid, surprisingly, came from Nanjing Auto Corp (NAC) creating an awkward situation – SAIC owned the IPR, NAC had the assets and plant to make the cars.

In very short order, much of what remained of the production facilities was shipped to a new plant in Nanjing. NAC established NAC MG UK Ltd as a holding company and kept up the lease for Longbridge (the Phoenix Four having

sold the land to property developers a few years earlier), albeit on a much reduced footprint. By 2008, the Rover 25 Streetwise was on sale in China as the MG3 SW, the MG ZT as the MG 7 and the MG TF was back in production. In the meantime, SAIC had launched the restyled 750 having worked in conjunction with a team of former MG-Rover staff now employed by SAIC and Ricardo. SAIC were convinced they would be able to utilise the Rover badge, but Ford, having bought the Rover name from BMW in 2006, refused permission and so the Roewe name was created for the Chinese market.

In late 2007 NAC ran into the age old MG problem – despite having a Joint Venture with Fiat, they were struggling financially after presumably putting so much focus on their new brand. The Chinese government intervened, and in April 2008 a merger officially took place between SAIC and NAC. This gave SAIC a much needed export licence allowing them to export Roewe models with the MG badge, whilst NAC got access to much needed newer models in development.



2007 is where the UK story picks up again for MG enthusiasts, but 2008 is the point at which the MG ZR and MG ZT would no longer have complied with European car sales type approval without some significant updates, consequently limiting the return of the brand until newer models were available, much to the dismay of many a keen MG ZR and ZT owner. So NAC MG launched with the MG TF in the UK instead, assembling it at Longbridge. There had been significant development to bring the TF back because many of the original parts suppliers were no longer in business. Apart from some small changes to the front bumper and instrument cluster, and along with just one engine choice (the revised N-series 1.8 with 135bhp), the TF was back, looking much as it had done previously in 2005.

The launch model, the LE500, was a limited edition of 500 kitted out with a lot of extras such as leather seats, air-con and a hardtop at a list price of £16,399, cheap enough compared to the same specification in early 2005 that would have put the price at well over £20,000. The

problem was that whilst there was much fanfare amongst the MG community at its return, there wasn't much notice being taken by the general public. Even if Joe Public knew the TF was back, Joe Public would naturally think of head gasket failure combined with a slightly jaundiced view of Chinese manufacturing and dismiss the TF without a second's thought. At this stage, Mazda were selling their unquestionably better third generation MX5 at a slightly higher price with a choice of engines and also in folding metal roof form. Add in the recession starting in 2008 and sales of the TF were predictably slow.

As the few hundred LE500s rolled out of the showrooms into the hands of MG enthusiasts, it soon became apparent that whilst mechanically the cars were reliable, build quality remained an issue with many of the LE500s having to be resprayed under warranty, followed by several recalls and problems with the reverse parking sensors. Some TFs were off the road for months on end whilst dealers attempted to sort the issues out. TF production stopped in 2011 after fewer than 1000 of the LE500, 135 and 85th

models had been sold.

A number of the new MG dealers were smaller specialists focusing on performance car sales. They were keen to have a new sports car on their forecourt, having signed up on the promise of new MG models on the way. During this period in early 2009, NAC MG UK Ltd changed its name to MG Motor UK Ltd under a change in management following the SAIC takeover. It took until May 2011 to see a new model in the showroom, the MG6 which came in just one body style, with one petrol engine (the TCi-TECH) and a manual five speed transmission. Clearly not a sports car, add in what many people still erroneously believe is a K-series Turbo petrol engine plus honest fuel economy and emissions figures that were not competitive with European benchmarks and the MG6 was unsurprisingly a slow seller.

With only one model on offer targeting a declining sector of the market and the TF no longer available, many dealers gave up and sales suffered even further. Shortly after, in July 2011, the Magnette (saloon) was added to the range



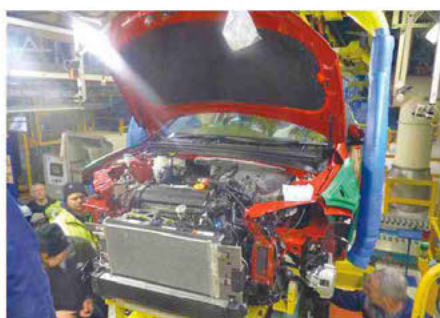
and in December 2012 a new diesel engine was offered. Quite why no-one thought to hang onto the G-series diesel engine they already had is not known, but that unit is now owned by an Indian firm, Sonalika. All this was proving too little, too late. Press reviews of the MG6 were scathing of the bland interior and its lack of quality and refinement, whilst many MG enthusiasts felt it lacked the sporting appeal of the MG Z range and were quick to dismiss it owing to its Chinese origins and all that this implied in terms of the perception of quality and the belief that SAIC had forced the MG-Rover closure.

Initially MG Motor UK relied on limited advertising budgets, with a short run of billboard ads and a television advertisement produced by Scott Ridley in Hong Kong. This played heavily on the past glories of the MGA and MGB, completely ignoring the ZR/ZS/ZT enthusiasts who were more likely to be the buyers of the MG6. A later campaign suggested that the MG6 was made in the UK, somewhat misleading as the cars are shipped in minus the front end and are completed on the line at

Longbridge. There was also a clear lack of either product positioning or a memorable brand tag line. Worse, though, was the reliance on social media with an amateurish feel on the MG Motor UK Facebook page for displaying poor quality pictures of owners collecting their cars, or cars on display in shopping centres, and it wasn't long before many MG enthusiasts were either totally apathetic or bemoaning the ineptitude of the company.

It wasn't all bad, however. The company had its moments with a shrewd move into the British Touring Car Championship, but failed to capitalise on that success. What we got at the end of 2012 was a questionable BTCC special edition that offered none of the power gains for which enthusiasts were calling. Worse, the company have yet to capitalise on their 2014 manufacturer's title win. Aside from the BTCC there have been other sponsorship deals such as the British Athletics and a cycling team, though again the value that these offered is debatable.

Despite this the MG6 is not an essentially bad car. It may not compete with European brands



NAC quickly drew up plans for a new factory to be built in China for their British acquisition (above), but the final assembly of UK MG6s takes place in Longbridge (left). The MG3 played the Cool Britannia theme well (top left) and has been very well received, while the GS SUV (below) targets a new sector for MG.





The MG7 and TF did not sell well in China (top left), but the MG3SW was a surprising hit. Sponsorship and product placement of the MG6 in the UK (top) have not paid dividends, but SAIC have invested heavily in the UK design and development capability (above).

China of the Britishness of the brand, but that begs the question: why not just fund the design studio rather than attempting to sell into a competitive, quality conscious and aspiration driven market like the UK? But with market share and sales also slipping in China, can SAIC afford to even have its own brand going forward, or would it be better relying on its JVs with VW and GM? Of the 4.4 million cars made last year by SAIC, fewer than 400,000 of them were their own Roewe and MG sales. Are the Chinese consumers just not convinced, either?

To hear the MG corporate line, SAIC are in it for the long term with the aim of making MG a volume seller. The Chinese certainly don't rush into anything, instead taking the slow and steady approach. But MG as a volume seller? That is a tough one to sell to Western enthusiasts, probably more so than starting again with a completely new brand. Most enthusiasts and the public alike perceive MG as a niche brand of sports cars sitting alongside a bigger brand. Whilst the Chinese were new to the concept of

in terms of perceptible quality, but few have suffered mechanical gremlins and the majority of the problems have been minor niggles, with an above industry average percentage passing their first MoTs with no problems. Depending on the dealer, these minor issues in the main have been dealt with in a timely manner, even beyond the warranty period. The one notable comment on the MG6 has been the feedback from the 2014 *AutoExpress* driver survey which put the MG6 as the Best Handling Car in Britain, and it came 6th overall in the Best Car to Own category. Naturally some scoffed at the owners making this claim (and not surprisingly as the handling title has previously gone to the Skoda Yeti), but it is indicative of how much the owners love their MG6 that they made the effort to give the feedback and heap sufficient praise upon this aspect for it to achieve such a win.

In June 2013, the MG3 was launched amidst much fanfare at Silverstone in front of thousands of MG enthusiasts. The MG3, like the MG6, had been launched several years earlier in China and other overseas LHD markets. With the MG community being so prolific online, the car had already been judged negatively by some purely on looks. For the UK launch the MG3 was given a small make-over to address issues that needed resolving for Europe, including the fitment of daylight running lights. However, yet again it was launched with just the one petrol engine, and in one five-door body style. Furthermore, on paper the New Small Engine (NSE) naturally aspirated, iron block 1.5L engine producing 105Ps looked to be a retrograde step, lacking the low down grunt of even the 1989-designed 105Ps 1.4L K-series 16V engine, and again with comparatively poor economy and emissions figures and only a five speed manual transmission; things were not looking good.

At least the design team at SAIC Motor UK Technical Centre Ltd (SMTC), the UK engineering and design arm, had pushed the boat out in terms of adding more sporting appeal to the simple interior along with a list of personalisation options. With a more youthful appeal, in a growing sector of the market, and a

more focused advertising campaign playing on the Cool Britannia theme plus more positive press reviews, the MG3 has been a much greater success and sales have held a relatively steady average of around 150 cars per month, far better than the MG6 managed. Of course, this has also been helped by offering it at a much lower price than the competition with a low cost of servicing and a low Group 4 insurance, making for a very appealing second car or a first car for younger and/or budget conscious drivers. And the good news is that MG3 buyers are a broad spectrum from teenagers to pensioners, with more buyers coming from outside of the enthusiast community.

So as we approach the end of the first ten years, where is the business headed and how does the community feel about the brand now in its 91st (or 92nd) year? If you look purely at the growth over 2014, MG had the highest percentage (361%) of all manufacturers and added 24 new dealers. In real terms though, the percentage obscures the fact that the company are still only selling a relative handful of cars per month, with a 0.08% market share. Drilling further into those figures, some of the MG3 sales are from MG6 owners either as trade-ins or as a second car for their partner. In addition, 500 lower specification MG6s were supplied to Avis in 2012. When these found their way onto the secondhand market, the values started to slide resulting in zero miles pre-registered top specification MG6s selling at up to £6000 off the list price. In real terms the customer base is still very small, with the MG3 mainly winning any conquest sales that MG gain.

The question then is how can MG Motor UK Ltd stay in business with such a poor performance to date? One might argue that with the might of SAIC propping it up, profitability is not an issue. Certainly SAIC have invested heavily in the Longbridge facility to the tune of over £50 million, and SAIC achieved a creditable 85th position in the Fortune Global Top 100 companies ranking in 2014.

The cynical believe MG Motor UK Ltd may simply be a ploy to convince the home market in



MG TEN YEARS ON

MG ten years ago, the idea was to market the brand based on its British heritage. They have done that in China, with a tag line of *Since 1924* used almost everywhere else except in the UK. They have played on the Cool Britannia theme in their marketing. To view the promotional material in other markets, it looks very professional, albeit at times with questionable English translations.

So how come MG Motor UK Ltd have not consistently produced the same professionalism? The marketing material has been adequate at best, but anodyne and lacking in spirit. There is no sense of what the brand was and where it is going. There is no sense of who buys an MG, no positioning so to speak. As some enthusiasts point out, the cars might just as well have some other Far Eastern badge on the nose. MG Motor UK have the toughest customer base to win over; the UK is, after all, the birthplace of the brand. MINI and Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) have proven that foreign ownership is not an obstacle to creating desire and selling cars globally to buyers hungry for a slice of British style. Nor is there a problem in changing the traditional perception of the company to include new products to take on newly emerging

BTCC (below) has brought MG good exposure, and in 2015 that will include US TV. The MG3 (bottom) has been very well received, and the EV Concept (top) also has potential.



sectors of the market such as SUVs. The secret there, though, is that the new parent companies left design and production in the UK and financed the British teams to do what they do best – make cars that people want with a strong whiff of still being British. Exactly what NAC, and subsequently SAIC, should have done.


At this point, ten years on, is it too late to change that? No. One of the richest companies in the world, Apple, has managed to make *Made in China* work for them. So what should SAIC do? As MG are not in the same league as MINI and JLR in terms of pricing, understandably SAIC will want to make use of lower cost production in China and Thailand. However, they need to do something to increase their sales. First off, they should design the cars to European standard from the start and then tweak for their own market. Currently, new models are designed for China, are visible for several years in numerous emerging LHD markets, then arrive in the UK looking a little jaded with negative perceptions already in place.

Allied to a design-for-Europe philosophy, the next step must be to return to Western Europe and North America, the latter of which clearly requires a sports car. With sales returning to these two key historic markets, that in turn will start to create a sense of what the MG badge once was, leading to an enhanced brand perception in its home market of China, and in turn more domestic sales. Especially if the Chinese believe that what they are seeing launched is already on sale in Europe.

That sports car... MG Motor UK management must be tired of being asked the question of

when they will offer one. The fact it is continually being asked indicates just how much enthusiasts and the motoring press want to see one again. Not everybody will buy one, but the fact that it exists will create desire. That is a tough business case to justify on sales numbers alone, but one that unfortunately has to be done for a brand such as MG with its history. Understandably, in order to sell in volume it is necessary to offer cars that appeal to a broad market. At the same time though, you have to have a fun aspect to the business for those cars to be seen as desirable. For MG, that means the inevitable sports car. Not the Zero, the Icon or the more realistic MG EV, concepts that appear to have little relevance to the brand in Western enthusiasts' minds.

More importantly, MG need to build that halo model sports car and then continue to build around the values for which the MG brand once stood: Safety Fast. MG must get a sports car out there that they can sell in Europe, the USA and every other Western market that, in turn, inspires buyers in China. And not just stop at a sports car. MG must start creating halo models in each range, something like the MG3 Trophy. One engine and transmission choice is just not good enough and will not create an aspirational lifestyle statement for buyers in the way that MINI and JLR have successfully done with their performance badges.

Ultimately, most of those who bought the TF, the 6 and the 3 did so as enthusiasts based on MG's promises of a brighter future. Trust and respect. These buyers invested in MG; now MG need to start delivering on those promises. 





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DARK ICE

M

Gs are often all about supporting the underdog or the unsung hero, the car that sits in the shadow of other manufacturers who seem to be regarded as superior, whether it's the MGF and TF against the Mazda MX-5, or the ZR that's neglected in favour of the Golf GTi and Focus STi. However, the advantages of supporting the underdog are that you get more for your money, you're not following the crowds and you can produce some surprising results. Kristian Kassinen is one such person who appreciates what MG-Rover can offer. He's owned seven MGs since 2007 and managed to tune the engines and design some stunning looking products. When he was studying Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering at Warwick back in 2008, he was involved in making custom audio installs and other audio related parts under the business name of Dark Ice Audio.

'I then started to branch out into universal car modification parts,' he says, 'such as our adjustable exhaust silencer baffle which had great reviews in *Max Power* and *Fast Car* magazines, and so I changed the name to Dark Ice Designs to reflect the non-audio related parts I was making.'

After owning several 1.4 K-series MG-Rovers, Kris bought a 220D and discovered how easily it could be tuned with nothing more than a screwdriver and spanner, raising the power output from 84 to 110bhp by tweaking the mechanical fuel pump and turbo wastegate actuator.

L-SERIES

When, back in 2010, Kris bought the X-Power Grey MG ZR 115 2.0L seen here, he spotted an opportunity. 'I looked for performance products for the 2.0-litre L-series engine and realised that the few people who had been making them, such as hobbyists like Wingy and DonnyDiesel on the MG-Rover.



MG Rover fan, mechanical and manufacturing engineer and owner of Dark Ice Designs, Kristian Kassinen has developed a number of tuning products for the diesel and petrol engine Z-cars. One of his test cars is this diesel engined ZR that now produces 185bhp and 260lb.ft of torque.

Words and pictures: Rob Hawkins

DEAD DIESEL

org forum, had moved on from the scene and you could no longer get these parts,' he explains. 'But I had the manufacturers in place and the necessary skills to start making these parts again that you could no longer buy, such as EGR blanking valves and turbo outlet pipes.'

New tuning products were soon being developed, including strut braces for the ZR and ZS (including the equivalent Rover models), short shifters (quick shift) for the PG1 and R65 gearboxes, turbo hose kits, uprated anti-roll bars and camber adjustment kits. Kris found that whilst a remap or tuning box could help to produce more performance, the standard MAF (mass air flow) sensor on the ZR is prone to degradation. This can be resolved with a device such as a Digimafam which amplifies the MAF signal, and on the early ZR and ZS he's discovered this can even increase performance.

He also found difficulties with the front and rear strut braces that were available for the ZR, explaining: 'The offerings on

the market were mainly for show, with thin aluminium bars, pivots and joints and thin joining bolts, all of which massively reduce the stiffness of the strut brace. We designed and developed a strut brace that was solid, designed to work and fit all the engines – a tough task!'

After designing, making and fitting a front strut brace, Kris was impressed with the results, saying: 'The first time we fitted the prototype front strut brace we were blown away by the difference it made; even simply changing lanes on the motorway was immediate without any sloppiness or wallowing. It was a fantastic start to our range of strut braces. A rear strut brace quickly followed that was designed to bolt on with no drilling and to minimise any boot space loss.' Kris was the first to develop a strut brace for the ZS range, admitting there were a lot of difficulties, especially with the lack of space in the KV6 engine bay, and it took many prototypes to get to a design that worked and fitted all engines.



MANDREL BENT

The biggest modification fitted to the ZR seen here is a custom built Garret GT1752 turbo, which replaces the standard GT1549 unit. 'After lots of trial and error we got it fitted with a custom mandrel bent stainless downpipe, reducer hose and modified oil feed,' Kris explains. 'We had been monitoring EGT, boost and EMP for some time with the standard turbo and then with the new turbo fitted to ensure that there would be no head lift problems, something commonly associated with the earlier hybrid turbos people had experimented with. The first time on the dyno, it made 176bhp. This wasn't enough, so we fitted a front mounted intercooler to help produce a colder and denser charge and the next dyno run was 185bhp with 260lb.ft – some good figures.' Kris admits that with a larger turbo there is an increase in turbo lag, but the extra torque and high rpm performance more than makes up for it. But he warns that fitting a custom turbo is not for the faint hearted, as it often involves a lot of trial and error, work, patience and ultimately money, but that the results are worth it.

Kris has been unlucky in some cases with the products he has developed. He worked alongside Longlife Oxford to produce a range of 2.5in mandrel bent (no crush bends) stainless steel exhaust systems for the MG ZR and ZS. In his opinion, these are a big improvement over the stock 2.25in draw bent steel systems with the restrictive back boxes. 'We had the very first prototype fitted to our car,' he says. 'It offered a great sound and great performance, and with a lifetime warranty. Unfortunately Longlife Oxford closed down and the exhaust systems were discontinued.'

Other troubles were easier to fix, such as when the standard rubber intake hoses started to fail due to increasing the boost pressure. This is because the rocker cover vents hot, oily gases into the air intake system, which degrades the rubbers hoses and so they split. Kris replaced the standard rubber hoses with silicone hoses and launched a new kit. To prevent the air intake system blocking up with oily sludge, he has fitted a modified oil catch can and blanked off the EGR valve.

'Blanking the EGR valve results in better fuel economy and performance,' explains Kris, who also found this modification produces less smoke from the exhaust. The only downside of blanking off the EGR valve in this case concerns the fact that if it's water cooled, the engine takes a little longer to warm up and the engine management light is switched on in post-2004 cars.

The biggest performance gain for the L-series diesel is found by fitting the injectors from the Rover 220/420/620 (commonly known as SDI injectors) and increasing the boost to around 19psi. Kris found an additional 25bhp and plenty of extra torque from these modifications and explains: 'The injectors are very straightforward to fit (get yourself a slide hammer) and increasing the boost either requires adjustment of the turbo wastegate or fitting a boost controller. Unfortunately, fitting SDI injectors can increase off-boost smoke and reduce fuel economy, but these can both be improved with a remap.'

SHIFTING SHORT

'People have been making short shifters on their PG1 gearbox cars by cutting the gearstick between the pivot and end and welding in an extra piece of metal,' explains Kris. 'We wanted to develop a product that would not require trial and error and an ability to weld!' So Kris has created a short shifter that's bolted onto the bottom of the gearstick and allows a shorter throw for quicker shifting. In developing this product he discovered lots of Rover peculiarities; the welding of the linkage counterweight at any old angle and the change in diameter of the gear stick bottom housing are some examples.

Other easy to fit products include a set of bolt-on bonnet struts. Most modern cars now have gas struts fitted which help lift and hold the bonnet up, and Kris wanted to offer this to ZR and ZS owners. However, he discovered that the universal kits available required drilling and welding. 'It took some clever thinking to develop our first range of bolt-on bonnet gas struts,' he says. 'As an engineer, I am never happy until the product is perfect and so we went back to the drawing board and

Tech Spec

Model: MG ZR 115

Year of manufacture: 2004

Engine: Remapped 2.0 litre diesel (L-series) with SDI injectors, Garret GT1752 turbo running at 22psi with Turbosmart boost controller, performance turbo outlet pipe, silicone boost and coolant hoses, de-cat pipe with full 2.5 inch mandrel bent stainless exhaust system and free flowing rear silencer, EGR removed and blanked, foam open cone air filter, Digimafam, oil catch can, front mounted intercooler

Gearbox: PG1 five speed manual

with short shifter and CG Motorsport dual friction clutch

Brakes: Servo assisted dual circuit system, single piston calipers all round with front caliper adaptor brackets and 316mm MINI vented discs and Pagid brake pads

Suspension: Standard front MacPherson struts and lower arms with 25mm anti-roll bar and upper strut brace. Rear trailing arms with coil springs and dampers, 19mm anti-roll bar, upper strut brace

Wheels and tyres: MG ZS 17in 11-spoke alloy wheels with 205/45 Continental Sport Contact tyres

developed a Mk2 version of the bonnet gas struts that were cheaper and easier to fit and required less maintenance.'

Kris has found that one of the biggest problems facing the ZS petrol engine cars concerns the clutch hydraulics. 'The OEM parts are made from plastic and very thin metal resulting in unexpected failures and a terrible clutch feeling,' he explains. 'An X-Power forum member called Sheddrist developed a kit utilising metal hydraulic cylinders and it was a big hit. It has turned out to be one of the primary modifications to do on a petrol PG1 MG ZS.' Unfortunately, Sheddrist stopped producing the kit several years ago, so Kris decided to see if he could reintroduce it. He reverse engineered it and, based on feedback from Sheddrist's original customers, improved on the design. A similar kit for the ZS diesels has now been launched.

BIGGER BRAKES

With more performance from his ZR, Kris realised he needed to improve the car's stopping power. 'At first I fitted EBC Green Stuff pads, but I wasn't impressed,' he comments. 'There was a lot of brake dust, but more disappointing was the feel of the brakes when cold – it was very uninspiring. As soon as the brakes warmed up the Green Stuff pads came into their own with no fade and good performance, but unfortunately they weren't for me. I did not like the feeling of pressing on the brake and not knowing whether they were warm and going to work or cold and lack lustre. I wanted consistency.'

There are several big brake kits available for the Z-cars, but larger discs and multi-piston calipers can cost as much as the value of the car. Kris wanted a cheaper solution and developed a 10mm thick laser cut steel adaptor bracket for the front brakes, which alters the mounting of the caliper and carrier, allowing a larger 316mm vented disc from the BMW MINI Cooper to be fitted. This provides a 25% increase in the braking performance over a standard disc. The adapter bracket kit costs £40 and a set of MINI Cooper discs costs around £60, which can be fitted with standard ZR Pagid pads that cost around £10-15, so all in all a very affordable upgrade.

The larger discs can only just be fitted with 16in wheels (providing no balancing weights have been fitted), so Kris recommends 17in wheels should be used instead. He has chosen 11-spoke alloys from the ZS, which in his opinion are the best looking MG-Rover wheels. He's refrained from lowering or heavily modifying the suspension, other than the aforementioned strut braces, plus a rear anti-roll bar.

'Fitting a rear anti-roll bar is a brilliant way to improve the handling of a FWD car and it was a shame Rover did away with their rear anti-roll bars in the year 2000 as part of a cost cutting agenda,' he asserts. 'We had already fitted a standard Rover BRM rear anti-roll bar, which is no longer available, and got comments from our passengers about how flat our ZR

Top right: Two litre L-series diesel now produces an impressive 185bhp. Splatter effect and anodised caps are some of the cosmetic upgrades from Dark Ice Designs.

Centre left: Boost and EMP (exhaust manifold pressure) gauges help to keep an eye on the engine and all its extra power.

Centre middle: 11-spoke 17in alloys from the ZS are the best wheels for the ZR in Kris's opinion. Note the adapter bracket allows larger 316mm vented discs from the MINI Cooper to be fitted at the front of the ZR.

Centre right: Rear strut brace firms up the handling (along with a rear anti-roll bar), and takes up minimal luggage space.

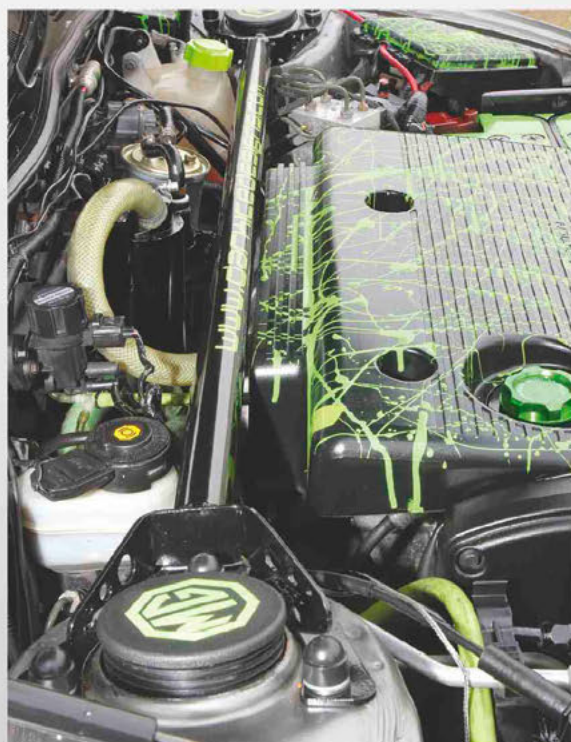


“I have better performance, 40+mpg, an engine that will last hundreds of thousands of miles and a great looking car too”





DARK ICE ZR DIESEL



Left: Front upper strut brace reduces suspension wallow in Kris's opinion.

Below left: Kris admits his ZR is a test mule and has a selection of gauges fitted to the dashboard to monitor the engine.

Below: Dark Ice MG resin dome badges provide an alternative for the octagonal logo.

went around corners. We then went one step further and produced our own rear 19mm anti-roll bar that is 25% stiffer than Rover's offerings.'

Some tuning products haven't always gone to plan. For example, a set of glowing coolant hoses was set to be a big seller and a lot of time, effort and money was spent in order to make a set of prototypes. 'Unfortunately the hoses were difficult and expensive to make, and the resultant product was too delicate to feasibly move forward with it,' explains Kris. That hasn't stopped him designing and creating though, and he has more plans in the pipeline. These include a full set of anodised aluminium engine caps, a big turbo kit, 40mm lowering springs, a selection of exterior styling parts and several components for the ZS 180.

Kris's ZR in our pictures is a long term test mule that makes for an entertaining drive. He's not afraid to push the engine and handling to the limit. 'The car is brilliant fun to drive already,' he exclaims, 'but once you start on the tuning journey, you can never have enough power. We would like to fit a VNT turbo at some point to increase overall power beyond the 200bhp mark and reduce the turbo lag. The car might end up going lower and on different wheels at some point too.'

And all this on the unlikely base of a diesel. So is Kris convinced that diesel power is the way forward and the right choice for an MG? 'I don't think I could go back to a petrol car after this diesel,' he admits. 'I have better performance, 40+mpg, an engine that will last hundreds of thousands of miles – and a great looking car too.'



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Q&A

Have you got a technical problem with your MG? If so, the combined expertise of Roger Parker and the MGOC Workshop may be able to help. For details of how to access this free service, see information box below.

ZT-T wheel nut aggravation

Q While my 2004 ZT-T was in the garage for some work, they rang to say that it had a rapid puncture in one front tyre. I asked them to fit the spare, but they rang back to say that they could not remove the security bolt and they were afraid that if they tried harder, they would break something. At the time I could think of no alternative but to have them go ahead and try harder. The result was that they mutilated the security bolt adaptor and could still not remove the wheel. When they tried to drill it out, they found the bolt was impossibly hard so that is mutilated as well!

I then had them inflate the tyre using foam so that I could drive the car home, where it is now stuck. I have tried using a chisel to turn the bolt, but I only succeeded in breaking the end off my chisel. I have bought a set of bolt extractors, but I am going to have to have one of these machined down so that it will fit between the bolt head and the wheel, and even then the hardness of the bolt might defeat me. Have you any bright ideas on this one please?

A A car of this age would originally have been fitted with the McGard security wheel bolt, the one that has the 'flower

pattern' indented head and needs the correct pattern tool to engage in the 'flower' recess to remove the bolt. Unfortunately too many who remove these do not take enough care in ensuring that the tool is fully engaged so when torque is applied, the tool slips and damage is done to the tool and locking bolt. It has been my belief for very many years that wheel locking nuts and bolts are only good for giving owners grief, as there are a number of effective tools on the market to remove these without the need of the locking tool. Of course it is also possible that the locking bolts have been changed for a different type, but there are solutions to remove them all.

Interestingly a common marketing approach for these removal tools is aimed at owners who have bought a car with no locking tool because it is lost or damaged. I have for many years removed security bolts from my cars and replaced them with a standard nut or bolt. Interestingly, as many wheel bolts and nuts have common dimensions, you can use one from another manufacturer that works just as well and actually looks slightly different. I've done this and had tyre fitters ask me for the locking tool as they assume it is a locking nut or bolt. This means there is the security projection of a locking nut/bolt, but in reality there will never be grief for the owner. The other point to make is that alloy wheels on MG-Rover cars simply are not attractive to thieves anymore, and any theft is likely to be of the whole car or of property inside.

This of course doesn't address the current situation, and options will have been reduced by the distortion and damage to the locking bolt that has occurred in the attempts to remove it so far. By far the most common method of removal without the original locking tool is to use one of the now relatively common sockets that have a left hand cutting thread on the inside, or a



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The *MG Enthusiast* Helpline is brought to you by Roger Parker and the technical team at the MGOC workshop, who kindly provide the expertise to solve your

problems. So if you are having trouble with your MG and need some help, please send full details to: **Simon Goldsworthy, MG Enthusiast, Kelsey Media,**

PO Box 978, Peterborough PE19FL or email them to **mg.ed@kelseybp.co.uk**

We will reply to all queries as quickly as possible, but some

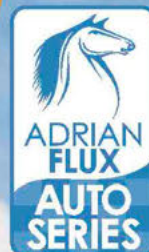
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variation of internal design that has a pattern that goes over the end of the locking bolt and is tapped with a hammer to engage before then being driven by a nut runner or turned using a tommy bar. As turning motion is applied, the tool inner face cuts into the locking bolt and the grip is almost always adequate to unscrew it as easily as the proper security tool does, in some cases more easily. I suffered a broken McGard security nut on the MGF a few years ago where the top sheared off, and one of these removal sockets took around 10 seconds to remove the remains. This was another reason why I don't like locking wheel nuts and bolts, and the plethora of removal tools that have arrived on the market simply reduces their security value, but here they have real value and I will mention a couple.

There is not a great deal of room between the undamaged head of the McGard locking bolt and the hole in the wheel in which it sits with ZT wheels and if the damage to the bolt is more than minor, then the chances are that this type of removal tool will not fit as indeed you have found to be the case. This leaves few practical options, and the most common would be to drill the centre of the head of the locking bolt. This can be done with

sharp, high quality drill bits. Use a centre punch mark to create the centre point for starters, and then drill with a small diameter bit to just deeper than the depth of the head of the bolt (use one of the other bolts to get the right measure). Then slowly drill out more of the head using successively slightly larger drills until you reach the same size of drill as the bolt's thread diameter. Now the head of the bolt can be broken off, meaning that you can remove the wheel and then concentrate on removing the remaining bolt thread.

At this point it will probably be best to clean the end of the exposed thread and screw on a new nut to about half the depth of the nut, then fill the remaining thread with a pool of weld. This weld has two major functions. One is that it will obviously rigidly secure the new nut to the remaining thread, but probably as important is that the heat which is generated will penetrate right down the bolt thread – and heat is still the best lubricant to shift seized nuts and bolts. Whilst the bolt is still extremely hot, it should then be quite easy to unscrew the remains of the bolt via the new head. Clearly what I have described is the use of a range of tools that is probably only found in a few home garages and mostly will be the preserve of a

good garage, and that is where I would suggest you go.

As a matter of interest (I expect it will be unsuitable for this instance), as heat is the best lubricator of seized nuts and bolts there are professional tools that utilise an electric heating coil that is slid over seized nuts and bolts to heat them in a very localised way to achieve their release. One specific use for these is aimed at wheel nuts and bolts with the intention that the wheel doesn't become damaged, but these kits cost many hundreds of pounds so once again we look at garages, and of course motoring organisations such as the AA and RAC who face these problems with roadside punctures on a daily basis.

Additionally there are specific tool kits designed to remove McGard locking nuts and bolts when the 'flower' pattern has been damaged. In simple terms the kit allows a special adapter to be hammered onto the end of the nut/bolt and it forms a pattern that engages on the nut/bolt and allows it to be undone. Here though the intention is to remove these when the original locking tool has been lost or damaged and so the nut/bolt is not over tightened and not seized, and again at a cost of several hundred pounds is hardly a DIY tool.

Over-reading rev counter

Q My 1965 MGB tachometer is over reading. It was calibrated some time ago so ought to be good, but it appears to be over reading by about 25%. Is this an electrical fault? Someone has suggested to me that it is, but where do I begin looking to cure this? The car is still positive ground/earth and it is standard ignition.

A I feel that the answer relates to the relatively common situation that the electrical components used in the RVI series of tachometer (used between 1964 and 1972 in the MGB) have always been regarded as 'flaky' and subject to error and component degradation. In some ways these have been compared to trying to set up slightly worn SU carbs when you get the carb set up one day and the idle is smooth and the response is crisp, yet the following day the idle has become rough and they need setting up again. The RVI tachometer seems to offer a similar path where the unit can be calibrated to show accurate readings one day, but this doesn't last and it is often not then possible to calibrate accurately without component replacement by a specialist.

This then raises the common question of whether you can convert the electronics inside from your RVI to the later and much more stable RVC type of rev counter, and this has been a common route for very many years. In addition to the conversion of the tachometer, there is a small wiring change needed because rather than the RVI system of responding to the current flow seen between the ignition switch and the coil as measured through a coil on the back of the RVI tachometer (or inside for the later ones), the RVC series is connected directly to the distributor side of the coil and responds directly to the coil being switched by the points (or electronic ignition switch). For an MGB this would mean the white wires that connect to the back of the RVI tachometer are disconnected and permanently joined together and a new wire connected to the distributor side of the coil (usually negative but read on) that on the post-1972 cars is seen as the white/black wire on circuit diagrams.

The problem for all pre-1968 MGBs with RVI tachometers is that originally the cars were positive earth and RVC tachometer conversions are all based on a negative earth, so simply changing to the later RVC tachometer or converting the inner workings to RVC type is not possible unless the car's earth is changed too. However, it appears that Spiyda Design offer an insulated box conversion that can allow the RVC working to be used on a positive earth vehicle to benefit from the more reliable and stable RVC tachometer function and ability to work with electronic ignition (some of which are compatible with positive earth). Go to www.spiyda.com/magento/index.php/smiths-rvi-rvc-conversion-external.html



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A view from *behind* the dashboard!

A lot of people are finely tuned into their MGs, and can detect the slightest sign of unhappiness before a full-blown problem develops. But David Sowman has taken this one step further and can actually tell what his MGB is thinking! This was how the car viewed a recent run...

Words: CWT 768H Pictures: David Sowman



It is a fine warm Tuesday when my driver, David, tells me we are going on an MG run in Yorkshire's High Dales this coming Sunday. Oh good! It will be about 100 miles or so and the start is some 100 miles away, at Tebay Services on the M6 in Cumbria. That means an early start on Sunday to reach the start venue in good time. Ugh!

But first let me introduce myself. I am a 44 year old, bright red 1970 chrome bumper MGB Roadster. I have wire wheels and overdrive, have been partially restored and a wee bit modified here and there. The paint job has a

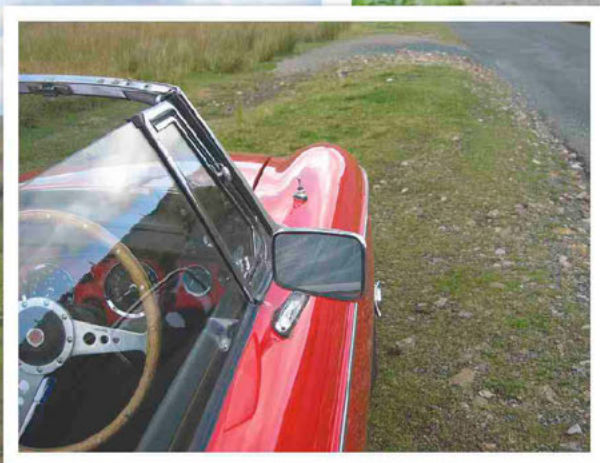
good finish which catches people's eye, especially as it contrasts so well against the re-chromed bumpers. However my quarterlights and door handles are still original worn chrome items which, while not looking fantastic, do lend an air of originality to my appearance with their nice period patina. David bought me from a guy living over the 'Hill' somewhere south west of Manchester and we've been together now for around six years, happy ones for us both I'm glad to say.

Anyway, back to the plot. During the week I get my usual preparatory once-over. All fluid levels are checked and topped

up where required. My twin SU carb dampers are topped up with oil and he might try and solve any odd little things that he has noticed during previous outings, like that oil breather pipe along the top of my rocker cover that is loose and rattling (it's just a broken P-clip that needs replacing). Inside I get a good vacuuming (ooooooh what a lovely feeling that is!) so that I look and feel really good in there. He actually bought me a new pair of MGOC floor mats a short while back and they really raise the tone of my interior appearance, making me feel quite smart. Externally he gets out the bucket and

sponge and gives me a thorough washing. He always leathers me down thoroughly afterwards so that I am both clean and dry. If there's time and the weather is OK, he'll also get out the polish and give me a good going over (...ah, ah, keep going David, yes just that other little bit, please ...oh yes, that just felt so cool!) And now I even smell nice as well as look good. Then it's off to the garage for some much-needed petrol, the good quality stuff please chum so that I don't pink and misfire; I hate ethanol.

Come Sunday morning and I'm ready. It's cloudy but not too cold. He's packed his usual



stuff needed for a day out (chairs, picnic, coats, hats and so on); also some tools and top-up oil for the carbs. I always seem to suck all the oil out of them during the day, then they flutter and I run a bit rough, as he has found out once or twice. He treats me very well so I try to repay him by not letting him down mechanically during events. His pal, Colin, arrives to navigate him. David's wife Pam doesn't get on too well with me, she cannot seem to get comfy in my seats. This is a shame as I like her a lot. (Actually I sometimes feel she might be just a little bit jealous of me as she thinks David

probably spends a little too much time with me instead of her. Probably true at times, but she shouldn't take it to heart as I know without any doubt that she is David's first love). After setting off, we run through some light rain on the way over, rather spoiling my lovely clean look, but it is only light and doesn't last long so does not muddy me up much.

At the start, after parking where instructed, he and Colin potter off to register, collect the route information and no doubt drink their customary coffee. Meanwhile, I've been parked up next to a very nice MGB. We strike up a

conversation and soon find we have much in common (obviously, you might think, both being MGBs!). She is very nice and I think we could get along well, if our owners would only let us. But here they are, coming back already, meaning that it must be time to go.

Saying a quick cheerio to my new friend and giving her a crafty wink (oh yes, you didn't know I could do that, did you?), David fires me up, checks all systems are OK then off we roll. Now, I can't read maps, I just go where I'm steered, but I do know that I am enjoying the way we are headed. The roads quickly turn into those twisty

but nice narrow country lanes, though often with nasty big potholes right where my wheels wanted to go. David's not that good at avoiding them but, since I can usually see them long before he does, I can brace myself to some extent, using my suspension to reduce the effect on all my bits - and on his teeth fillings. We go for many miles like this and the views are wonderful. After some time we stop at a lovely spot on the roadside high up in the hills with a magnificent view. They get out and start guzzling food, while I just sit there quietly ticking as I cool down. I was getting a trifle



puffed up that last hill you see, and he was a bit slow at switching on the auxiliary fan that helps keep me cool. No harm done though and they go off to take photos and admire the view. Well that's an important part of their reason for doing this run, isn't it?

So now it seems time to tackle the second half. They climb in, belt up, fire me up and we continue the journey. All goes well at a steady relaxed pace for a while. Then quite suddenly I sense anxiety and tension in the cabin. It seems they have somehow missed the slot down to Hawes and we have gone miles out of our way. When many miles later we come to a T junction, they consult the map and make some decisions. David believes you have to arrive back at the finish within an allotted time allowance to get your finisher's

award – and he really wants his! Time is of the essence and he reckons that if he pushes me hard we could make it. So yippee, off we go for some quicker stuff. It's quite a good road back towards Hawes and, although he doesn't know the road, David starts putting the hammer down a bit, passing other cars at the earliest opportunity and straightening the road at every point he can. He's going fast now, yet quite within his and my capabilities, such that Hawes comes up within about 15 minutes or so after some exhilarating driving.

Hawes is a designated ten minute comfort stop, but David and Colin both feel OK and decide to cross their legs and try to make the finish in time. This means that I don't get my breather either – oh bother! Slotting onto the road towards Ingleton, they find this to be

another fine driving road and, surprisingly, quite smooth. It's the sort of road I was designed for and I start to really enjoy my day just so much more.

David really pushes the hammer down now so that we are travelling pretty fast. He snicks my gear lever through the 'box of cogs exactly as I require, caresses the steering wheel with little tweaks when needed, then presses those pedals at exactly the right moments so as to get the best out of me. I respond by whipping those pistons up and down at a ridiculous rate, sucking increasingly massive amounts of petrol through the carbs in stunningly accurate quantities and firing it all in my cylinders at precisely the right microsecond to make it all count. Oh I do so like it when he asks me for some real performance, it happens so infrequently, yet we both obviously love it. After a while, he and I seem to gel almost into one and perform as a well-oiled unit. He knows exactly what he can do with me and can position me on the road almost to the centimetre. He is good too at sensing my limits of adhesion and braking and, although he gets some slight tyre squeal out of me on occasions, we are never in any danger of flying off the road or hitting things. This was almost



seventh heaven for me and I could sense David's enjoyment as I observe him from my dashboard spy point grinning from ear to ear like a Cheshire cat. Do you remember hearing about those F1 drivers who say that when they get a car tuned to their particular liking, they are 'in the zone' and feel that they can do anything with their car and know how to push it to the absolute limit with supreme confidence? Well it's a bit like that with David and me. It is actually quite difficult to express this in words that adequately describe the sensation, but it's a fantastic experience for us both.

Colin meanwhile has turned rather quiet and a bit pale, but hangs on for dear life. He says that the brakes on his side don't seem to be working very well - cheeky so and so! He also offers to clean the seat should the worst happen; well you really couldn't ask for more, could you? And he suggests that David later tries

to bash out those two foot impressions now embedded in the front bulkhead metal ... so didn't you trust him and me then, Colin? Mind you, some bikers who pass us on those roads get quite a surprise when they look back just after passing us, only to see us still up there with their back wheels and urging them to 'get on with it' or 'get out of our way.' I mean, two old codgers in an elderly classic car behaving like two 17 year olds really enjoying themselves - but still safely. What a smashing fun time we have, and we do arrive back at the finish with five minutes to spare and so do receive our craved-for finisher's award.

Oh dear, that's when I disgrace myself and let David dislodge myself and let David stall on the finish line and won't restart. I know the problem but David doesn't, so he rolls me away to the lane side. After a short cool down, he eventually twigs and refills my empty carb dashpots with oil. Hey presto - I fire up so he

doesn't have to push me into the car park after all, something he really hates doing.

Once there, he lets me cool down while they go off to the tearoom for their own refreshments prior to the drive home. I'm too exhausted to chat with either of the cars I'm parked next to, and anyway they too look pretty well shattered from their day's work.

So now it's hood back up and set off home. The drive back is uneventful main road stuff, but tiring as we are all three quite weary after our fun and having had so much bracing fresh air. Once home, it's goodbyes all round before David batters me down for bed under the carport I share with his other project MGB, the one he's rebuilding with a 3.5-litre V8 engine (lucky so and so, I'm quite jealous!). So now we wait for the next event, or simply for any excuse to go out for a spin into the countryside again, just for fun you know.



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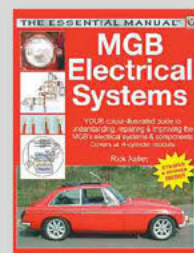
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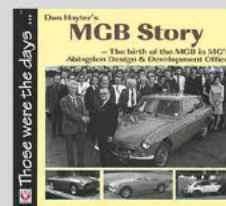
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Malcolm's big V8 goes limp

Plastic parts make changing the 260's fuel pump a nightmare.



2004 MG ZT-T 260 (vin 206)

Owned by:

Malcolm Robertson, Australia

Owned since:

2008

Mileage: 145,000km
(90,000 miles)

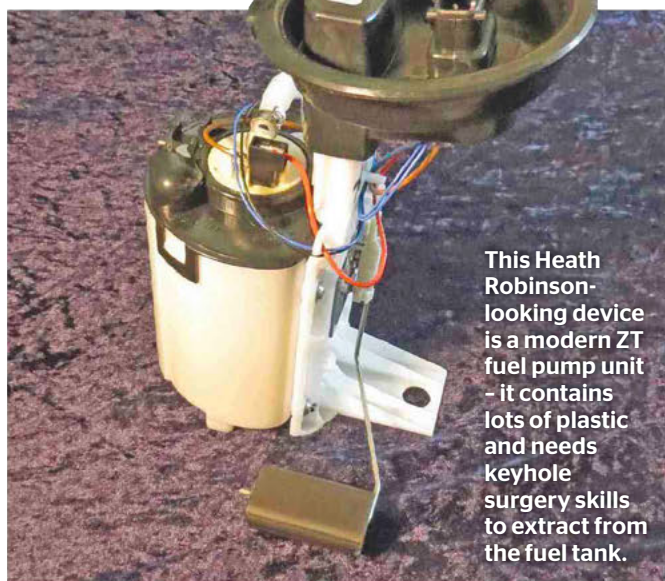
My previous report on the Two Sixty was last July when I replaced the radiator and fan using a Kenlowe adaptation developed by Julian Anderson. I'm pleased to report that the big V8 has been running well since then except for an intermittent misfire at low revs under load. As anyone who has tried to track something intermittent down will tell you, it is not an easy task. In the old days you might have fiddled with your carbs or tinkered with the electrics. In 90% of cases you would eventually solve the problem and then chastise yourself for being so stupid for not spotting it immediately, whatever 'it' turned out to be.

On modern cars, it is not so easy. Even a relatively simple

engine like the Mustang V8 used in the Two Sixty has multiple sensors feeding information into a central engine management computer, runs eight coils in neat little packs that sit over each plug, has individual fuel injectors for each cylinder, fuel under pressure in rails, lines and in the fuel tank, and strange things called EGR valves and the like whose purpose in life escape me.

So, basically I had done nothing about tracking down the miss, as it wasn't really bad enough to worry about. Until one day on a long motorway drive sitting at a comfortable 70mph from Canberra to Sydney. About halfway there, the Two Sixty suddenly began to misfire seriously and then dropped down to limp mode, which is a set of very low power conditions the computer uses to get you to your destination without damaging the engine. It is awful! You block up the road driving too slowly, you have no power to get out of trouble – no self-respecting Two Sixty should ever have to limp anywhere.

An overnight rest seemed to fix things as the car ran perfectly in and around Sydney for the next few days, so I was brave enough to try driving home. The same thing happened at the halfway mark and we ended up limping badly to get home at all.



This Heath Robinson-looking device is a modern ZT fuel pump unit – it contains lots of plastic and needs keyhole surgery skills to extract from the fuel tank.

I consulted a local tuning specialist. I posted on the Two Sixties website (www.two-sixties.com) and even rang Two Sixties specialist, Brian Luti (aka Scooter), in Scotland (www.dreadnoughtscotland.co.uk) and since then have been working through a list of suggested remedies. The first was new spark plugs, the second was to check all the electrical connections, especially any to do with fuel control or measurement, and the third was to replace the fuel pump and fuel filter. With new plugs the car ran much better, but the miss was still evident. Disconnecting lots of electrical plugs, giving the pins a light spray with WD40 and reconnecting them seemed to make a difference too, as the car has run better than ever since doing that and hardly ever misses. But I hadn't been on a long trip to really test what the issue might have been that caused the limp and, as Scooter had said that the fuel pumps are a major source of problems on the Two Sixties in his experience, I decided to bite the bullet, buy in a hugely expensive new pump from Rimmers in England and fit it before my next long trip.

Now I do understand why manufacturers use plastic, but it hardens with age, it breaks when flexed, critical little bits snap off and make parts unusable. From a repair or

restoration point of view, it is a nightmare! I spent nearly an hour just trying to remove the six pin electrical connector from the top of the fuel tank without breaking it. This plug clicks on beautifully, just what a manufacturer wants, but try to get it off again – no way! Then to extract from the fuel tank the plastic Heath Robinson device that encases the fuel pump without breaking that is also almost impossible. Even the Haynes team comment in their ZT manual that it can't be done the way the original instructions from MG-Rover suggest. I could not disconnect one of the fuel hoses inside the tank (another snazzy plastic clip) and ended up, another hour later, cutting it off! Roger from the MGOC Workshop used the term 'keyhole surgery skills' when he and I were emailing about the matter. You have been warned...

But... it all went back together quite well, even the new seal around the top of the tank slipped into place nicely and has sealed (unlike a month or so earlier when I did the filter which is also in the tank but on the other side of the car – the Fire Brigade had to attend my local servo that time when I refuelled and the fuel in the filler neck all came pouring out the top of the tank!). And so far the car is running beautifully, but I am about to take that long drive to Sydney again...



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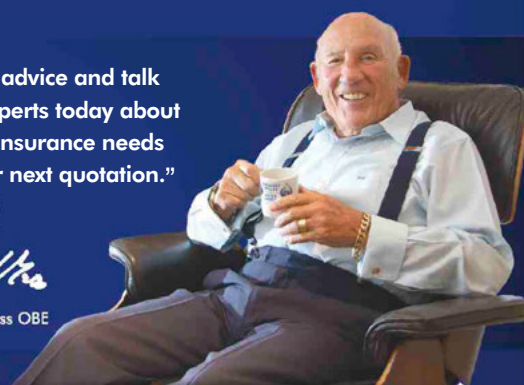


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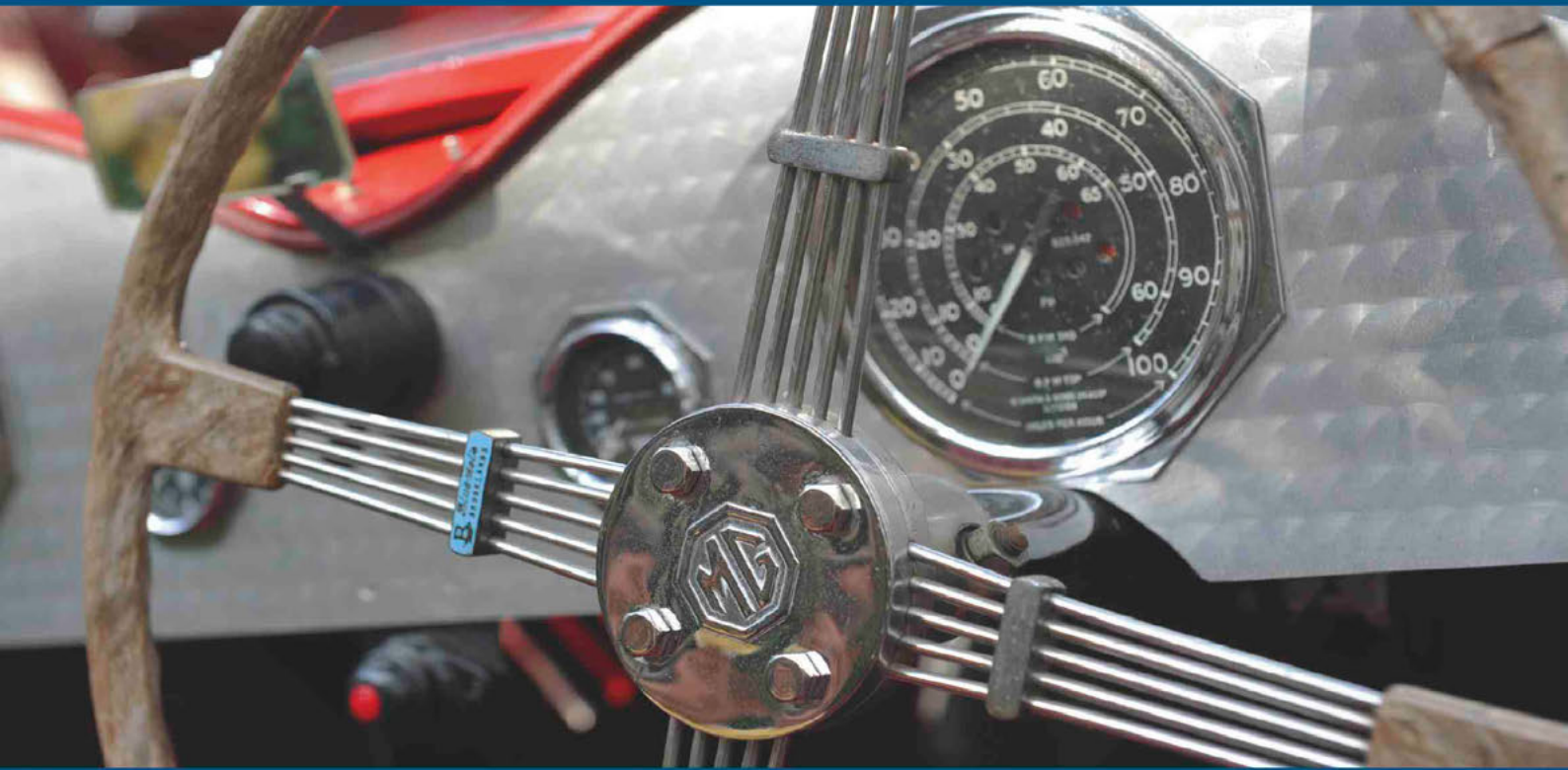
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MGA

MGA



£25,000. Chariot red, black seats (leather) older restoration with photo, only 1,813 miles since. U.S.A import, now RHD. Heritage certificat, excellent condition. MoT due Sept 2015. South Glam. 01446 792147 (MC)

MGA ROADSTER MK1 1600



1959, 1,400 miles, £27,500. Chariot Red, chrome wires, black leather seats piped in red, black mohair hood and tonneau, stainless exhaust, boot rack, full body off restoration 2006. Less than 1400 dry miles since, MoT, Tax exempt. Essington. 07968 008250 (JW)

MGB

BGT



1972, Only 9,500 miles, £5,995 ovno. Low mileage, believed correct. Lots history. MoT Nov 2015. Tax exempt. Unleaded conversion. Stainless exhaust. 5 new tyres. K&N filters. OD. Vermillion with navy interior. Very good condition. Lincolnshire. 07890 890639 (RB)

MGB GT



1980, 64,000 miles, £4,500. Date of registration 11/03/1980 A really lovely MGB GT which has had thousands of pounds spent ensuring this classic British sports car can continue to be used every day. Benefitting from new engine, new cylinder head, new radiator, new pulleys, tensioners and leads. Fully serviced and professionally tuned. Long Buckby. 07818 296180 (JW)

MGB GT



1979, 30,000 miles, £2,095. Classic car. Genuine miles, MoT, good condition. Plymouth. 07772 757843 (JW)

MGB GT COUPE

1977, 66,000 miles, £2,500 ono. In Tahiti blue, very genuine honest car, overdrive works, no rust. Would consider part exchange for a classic car. North London. 07836 288742/02088 058885 (JW)

MGB GT MK1



1966, £3,950. Chrome bumpers, tax exempt, overdrive, leather interior. Very original, solid bodywork, rust free. Drives extremely well but a little shabby chic. MoT. History file. Lancashire. 07582 574581 (HP)

MGB GT SNAPDRAGON



1981, Under 34,000 miles, £4,500. Yellow. Very original and in very good condition. 3 owners. MoT April 2015. Current owner for 6 years. 10 years MoT certs & invoices. Sills 2012 (repair panels + waxoiled). Four new tyres end 2013. For Sale due to relocation. Norfolk. 07966 557835 (JW)

MGB GT V8



1975, 70,000 miles, £13,750. Factory car, red, black interior. Original wheels, s/s exhaust, electronic ignition, engine stabiliser. K&N air filters. Fully Ziebarted. New battery and tyres. Service history from new. Condition A1. West Sussex. 07723 058619 (PB)

MGB GT



1981, £4,950. Black with colour keyed bumpers and Biscuit leather interior. Sunroof, option, Stag alloys, low indicated mileage, very sound body/chassis. Well cared for example. More photos available. Recent service. North Yorks. 01729 851243 (JP)

MGB LE ROADSTER



1981, 88,000 miles, £7,850. A1 Condition, a total of £7,000 spent on restoration work only 3,000 miles ago. New fittings, Kenwood radio/cd, hood & frame, uprated f/discs, abs rear shocks, prop shaft, tyres, motallita st wheel, windstop, elec ignition, full waxoiled treatment, rebuilt, resprayed bodywork etc. Bedford. 01234 740057 / 07831 372763 (MC)

MGB ROADSTER



1976, £4,950. Stored in a barn for 12 years. Refurbished a few years ago. Too many new parts fitted to list. 12 months MoT. Good condition underneath. Northern Ireland. 07928 228979 (JW)

MGB ROADSTER



1971, £8,000 ono. Tax exempt. MoT July 2015. Rosso red. 1800cc. O/D, W/W, stainless exhaust. New batteries, brake servo. Black leather seats. Bespoke tonneau, low miles since restoration. Dry use. Garaged. Buckinghamshire. 01908 315464 (PB)

MGB ROADSTER



1964, 43,545 miles, £9,250. Pull handle. Condition 2. O.E.W. Black leather, mohair hood, vinyl tonneau. Heritage cert. 9 months MoT. 3,700 miles since full restoration. Completed in 2004. Owned 22 years. Cheshire. 01614 305486 (PB)

MGB ROADSTER



1972, £4,250. Chrome bumpers. Tax exempt. Red with black interior & hood. MoT. Older resto, very solid, no rust. no filler. Very good driver. History file. 07582 574581 (JW)

MGB ROADSTER



1973, £7,499 ONO. Tax exempt. Excellent paintwork and solid body. Underbody painted black. Cavities protected with Dinitrol. Detailed engine bay, lots of new parts fitted. New Securon automatic seat belts fitted. Four new Khumho Solus 175/70 R14 tyres fitted. Full tonneau and half tonneau included. New hood 2011 and clutch Oct 2008. 01308 488421 (JW)

MGC

MGC ROADSTER AUTOMATIC



1967, 79,900 miles, £13,500. Primrose Yellow 3LTR auto. Very rare, genuine miles, might PX, fancy something different WHY? MoTd used regularly, wires, black leather, new MGOC carpets, stainless exhaust, upgrades. Kent. 07528 793837 (JW)

MIDGET

MG MIDGET



1978, £2,500. Dark green with new hood and radio. Excellent mechanics and bodywork. Tax and long MoT. Lots of history. Ready for summer. A great little car. Birmingham. 07818 033737 (MC)

MIDGET

1967, £1,200 ono. Tartan red, genuine reason for sale, unfinished project, some welding done, currently Sorn, no MoT, need finishing, new panel go with car, no canvassing. Isle Of Wight. 01983 408000 (JW)

MIDGET



1976, £4,000 ono. 1500cc. Owned last 20 years. Full ground up restoration concours winner and loads photos and history. Tax and 12 months MoT. Lovely little car. Selling due to bereavement. Essex. 01702 231239 (HP)

MIDGET

1971, £480 ono. Dry stored since 1982, body requires attention, spares, inspection welcome. Please ring for full details, 24 hour answer machine, buyer collects. Denbighshire. 01490 420462

MIDGET



£2,895 ono. With long MoT. T reg, drives well, needs small amount of tidying to bodywork. Interior needs attention. New battery. Sussex. 07767 862924 (JW)

MIDGET

1970, £6,500. To exchange. Tax free, Old English white, bare metal strip down, reconditioned engine, new hood, battery, suspension, exhaust, many new parts. Exchange for MGB or other automatic. Devon. 01822 855858

MIDGET



1974, £1,500. Round wheel arch chrome bumper model, ongoing unfinished project. New clutch, engine overhauled, reinstated, all parts to complete. Qualified panel beater (me) has done work up to now, need spares. Phone after 7pm. Lancs. 07882 949866

MIDGET



1970, £3,000. 1275 cc Green LBP 770J. MoT to 18 May 2015. Mileage unknown - new speedo. Substantial work to the engine and mechanics including: Halogen headlight conversion, 1275 engine rebuild, clutch flywheel temp gauge. New wishbone, rear springs, brakes, clutch slave cylinder, carburettor rebuild, exhaust rear box, front pipe, bodywork now needs attention. Located Oxford. Needs jumpstarting. Oxfordshire. 07754 617338 (CG)

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MIDGET



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MIDGET 1500



1975, £2,300 ono. Rubber bumper red solid reliable car, no rust, excellent condition, MoT expires Nov 2015, always garaged, any inspection welcome, no canvassing. Isle Of Wight. 07748 744262

MIDGETS



Midgets and Sprites bought and sold. Whether buying or selling. Contact the specialist Mike Authers on Abingdon 01235 834664. View current stock at www.mgmidgets.com. URGENTLY WANTED, Chrome bumpered, Midgets and Frogeyes. We buy outright or sell on commission. Oxfordshire. 01235 834664 (KP)

MGF & MGTF

MG TF 1.8

2003, £1,295. Convertible with hardtop. Red. Full MoT. Drives perfect. Bargain. Cambridgeshire. 07904 028763 or 01945 583367 (RB)

MGF



2001, 58,600 miles, £2,800 ono. Beautiful condition. New roof, clutch, battery, brakes, discs, boot spoiler. Garaged. Taxed. MoT. Never damaged. No rust. Warwickshire. 01827 717385 (PB)

MGF



1996, £POA. Alloy wheels, 6 month MoT, 1800 cc, good tyres, No head gasket issues, good runner. bfry04@hotmail.co.uk (CG)

MGF TROPHY 160



2001, 55,000 miles, £1,750. Blue. Very clean inside and out. A years MoT. Always garaged, very well looked after, new stainless steel exhaust, lovely sound. Alloys have just been powder coated. Genuine MG hardtop with heated rear window. Just had oil and filter change. Cleaned using autoglym, dodo juice, poorboys have got the standard rear light too. Service history. Kent. 07712 619174 (JW)

MGTF 135 SOFT TOP



2004, £1,850. VVC 1.8 Manual. Good soft top. Black leather seats. New tyres cost £800. MoT. Lovely clean interior. Spoiler from Escort. Yorkshire. 01925 811515 (TS)

TF



2003, 40,000 miles, £1,695. Looks stunning. My MG TF blue 1.8 is up for sale. Had head gasket and new clutch by previous owner. Drives and looks like new. Reluctant to let this car go. 1st to see will buy. Tel Darren. Car is located near Warrington. 07429 016718 (CG)

TF 1.8



2005, 88,000 miles, £1,550. Convertible, good condition with lots of extras, ie heated glass rear window fitted by MG authorised garage, head skimmed and head gasket replaced one year ago, cam belt and water pump replaced, brand new hood fitted one month ago, brand new MoT till feb 2016. Cream and tan leather interior. 07967 829714 (JW)

TF 115

2004, 53,000 miles, £1,295. Long MoT, Tahiti blue, full service, brake overhaul, no faults, outstanding condition, many mods done. Bedfordshire. 01767 312093 or 07989 110859 (PB)

TF 135



2004, £2,300 ono. Silver, blue top, new head gasket, cambelt, stainless steel sports exhaust, soft option pack, stainless steel pack, new spare tyre, hood cover, full history, MoT, reg no KC04 XWX, work by MGOC HQ. Dorset. 01202 814503

MG Z-CARS: ZR, ZS, ZT



13,000 miles, £3,800. One owner from new 13,000 dry miles in mint condition, LeMans Green. 01460 65343 (JP)

ZR 120+



2004, 55,000 miles, £1,900 ono. Owned by MG enthusiast, purchased from new. Unmarked bodywork, all carpets covered from new. Clean engine bay. Full repair and service history, including head gasket change. Would make a lovely show car. Swansea. 01792 202136 (PB)

ZR STEPSPEED



2002, £395. 1800cc, spares or repair, in good condition for its year, no MoT, sell complete or break for spares, very good engine, alloy wheels with good tyres. 07941 629631 or 01945 701344

PARTS FOR SALE



£120. Brand new, still boxed. 7Jx15, 4x108PCD. Cambridgeshire. 01223 837740 or 07961 500234 after 6.30pm (PB)

5 TYRES 165X15

£65. All good treads. Buyer collects. Nottinghamshire. 0115 985 6076 (RB)

FORD SIERRA GEARBOX

£265. 5 speed Type 9 suitable for conversion to many classic cars. MGA, Midget, Sprite, etc. Direct out of running car. Lothian. 01313 432574 (PB)

GARAGE CLEAR OUT

£POA. MGB GT TF parts for sale, wire wheels, aluminium bonnet, fabric Roof, engine, gear box, TF exhaust and much more. 01858 492627 (MU)

HOOD



2000, £100. Re-offered for Sale after let down! From MGF. Good condition (MG CAR CLUB MEMBER). Surrey. 07802 318950 (JP)

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LUCAS

£POA. 150 starter motors and alternators. For 70s to 90s vehicles. Call to see if I have what you need. North Yorkshire. 01423 709175 (PB)

MAGNETTE ZA/ZB

1956, £160. Front valance, radiator support panel, radiator, instrument gauges, SU carbs, alloy intake, inlet plus cast iron exhaust manifold, bumper brackets with jacking points, door handles, electrical. All original, no reproduction. Kent. 01622 747902

MG METRO TICKFORD BODYKIT

£200. Genuine tickford bodykit for an MG Metro plus other parts. Please contact for further information. Essex. 01763 257354 (JW)

MGA PARTS

£POA. Alloy bonnet sound condition, 4 good overriders, chrome dash / horn trim etc. 07477 414999 (JW)

MGA ROADSTER

1956, £100 or best offer. Nearside alloy door. Offside alloy door. Buckinghamshire. 07580 862589 (PB)

MGB

£POA. Complete auto gearbox. Overdrive boxes, MG 2 litre O series engine. ZB-A 1500 engine. 3 bearing 1800 B engine. 5 Rover 800 alloy wheels, fits B or TR. Somerset. 01458 241570 (PB)

MGB

£300 the lot. Black wraparound hard top, clutch slave cylinder, 2 Rostyle wheels, half tonneau black, headlamp chrome stone guards, new choke cable, clutch slave cylinder (as new), radiator centre filler box of odds rivetts, clips etc. Surrey. 01306 713355

MGB FRONT BUMPER



£POA. Chrome with o'riders and sidelamps etc. Bedfordshire. 01234 213871

MGB GT V8/STAG

£POA. Two steering wheels slot/holed, black interior trim vgc, sump pan ex cond, Stag rear centre bumper (as new). Lancs. 01616 651668

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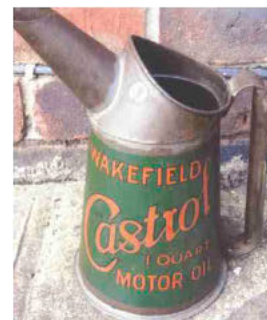
£Various. Starters, alternators, diodes, oils, bearings etc, plastic spare boxes with racking, spotlights, radios plus much more. Cambs. 01223 234656

VARIOUS PARTS

£POA. MG Midget rear axle casing. Austin Maestro 1275c gearbox and crankshaft. Mini 998cc engine. Gearbox less head. Pair Metro Mk1 disc brake calipers. Mini 1100cc crankshaft. Morris 1000 crankshafts. E. Sussex. 01435 866331 (PB)

MISCELLANEOUS

1 PINT CASTROL WAKEFIELD



1930, £150 post free. Original pourer. Nearly unused. Logo both sides. Cornwall. 07905 135288

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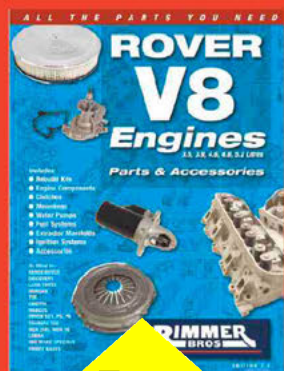
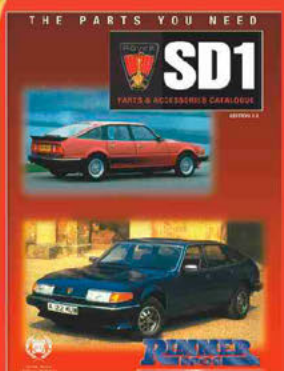
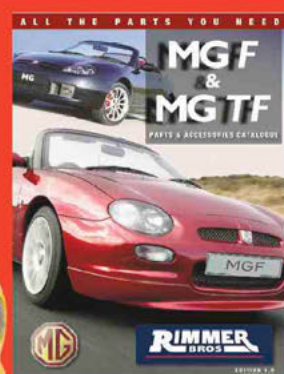
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AUTOCAR

£POA. 1962, 1963, 1965, 1966, 1967, 1968, 1969-1977, 1989-1992, many issues. Practical Classics 8/1996-2012 most issues. Phone before 6. Lancs. 01617 997548

CARCOON FOR SALE

£250 ono. To fit E-Type Jaguar or smaller car, with electric fans, hardly used. Cheltenham Area. 07919 120589 (MC)

CFF 562

£POA. Private registration number for sale. On retention and ready for transfer. Please call if you want to make an offer. Avon. 01225 852852 (RB)

CHERISHED NUMBER PLATES

£2,000. PMV 333 on retention for sale. Also 858 RTG £2,000. 627 GYC £1,200. Private sale. 07840 400569

FORECOURT SHELL SIGN



1960, £150. Pole 12ft tall. Somerset. 01373 812302 (RB)

GARAGE CLEARANCE

£Offers. Spares and tools etc. Suitable for auto jumbles. Large amount. Come and make an offer for the lot. Due to retirement. Must clear. First come first served. Aberdeenshire. 01466 792123 (PB)

GRANDEE MG MARQUES

Offers invited. 3 complete sets, in original albums. Motorsports 1955-1973 not complete years, 70 copies £50 the lot). 1974-1986, £15 per complete year. Warwickshire. 01788 890835

HAYNES/AUTOBOOK

£1-£7.50 each, can post. Autodata/Intereurope/P Russek + training supplements for classic cars/modern from 1960-2008, gc/vgc. Hants. 07867 813213

KISMET HPA MOT BAY



£2,200. Rolling road brake tester. Cornwall. 01579 362222 (RB)

L7 GYC

£1,500. Private registration for sale on retention, ready for immediate transfer. 01225 852852

LARGE STEEL CHEST

£80. Of workshop drawers, contains 144 drawers, each drawer has 6 compartments, very well made, 6ft high, 3ft wide, bargain. Suffolk. 07743 350654

LOCKHEED P38 LIGHTNING

£95 post free. Pre-war twin boom fighter, on marble base 7in x 5in, commemorative mascot Australia Sydney South Pacific on wings, chrome plated. Essex. 07964 486932

MOBILE BENCH/TOOL CHEST



£195. Retractable wheels, stainless covered hardwood top. Ex M.o.D. Top quality. 3 sliding lockable drawers and open storage area with shelf below. S. Yorks. 07971 223707 (JP)

MOTOR SPORT

£POA. 1970-1981 many issues, 1986-2001, 2003-2005. Offers. Phone before 6. Lancs. 01617 997548

NUMBER PLATE

£500. BIL 8228. Wrexham. 01978 357750 (JW)

OSRAM BULBS DISPLAY UNIT



1950, £85. For all vehicles. Display unit with selection of vintage bulbs. Nice condition. Size: 14 inches x 18 inches. Surrey. 020 8399 7541 (PB)

PRIVATE PLATES

£POA. NDF 80, NFK 28, NBK 91. Private sale of any of my private plates, all on retention. Sensible offers please. 01225 852852 or 07840 400569

PRIVATE REGISTRATION

£1,200. D1 VXR, on retention. Suffolk. 01473 721179

PRIVATE REGISTRATION FOR SALE



£POA. BREAD or B-READ (B13 EAD), my fabulous plate for 10 years on retention, open to offers please. 01225 852852 or 07840 400569

PRIVATE REGISTRATION PLATE



£Offers. Open to sensible offers. Lincolnshire. 01205 870815 (RB)

PRIVATE REGISTRATION PLATE

£495 ono. R5 TBR - ideal for any RS car. Currently on a retention certificate. Northamptonshire. 07426 657829 (RB)

RAC ASSOCIATE BADGE



£190 free post. Date disc on back 1918, brass finish, No A3950m Lancashire Automobile Club, no damage to enamel, size 4in dia. Cornwall. 07905 135288

RAC ASSOCIATE CIVIL SERVICE BADGE



1930, £75. King Crown. No. F30606. Civil Service on marble base. Essex. 07964 486932 (RB)

RAC BADGE



1960s, £20 + p&p. New-old stock (plastic). Never been on a car. Antrim. 07759 818732 (PB)

'REGGY'



£POA. Personal registration number for sale. I've had it over ten years. Fantastic plate. Could be other? Is (R13 GGY). On retention ready for transfer. Avon. 07840 400569 / 01225 852852

REGISTRATION FOR SALE

£1,800 ono. GCB 800. On retention. Ring Colin. No time wasters please. Cumbria. 01539 741080 (RB)

REGISTRATION FOR SALE

£1,500. KELLY AA. Mid Glamorgan. 07929 342396 (RB)

REGISTRATION NUMBER

£1,800 ono. LJC 800. Immediate transfer. Fee paid. Call after 7pm. Cumbria. 07930 162180 (PB)

ROYAL NAVY BADGE



£75 post free. By J. R. Gaunt, Birmingham. Queens Crown. Size: 5in x 3in. No damage. Bar fixing. Surrey. 07968 659967 (PB)

ROYAL OBSERVER CORPS BADGE



£85 post free. By J R Gaunt, London, mint condition, no damage Queen crown, pos 1950-1960, size 5in x 3in approx. Essex. 07964 486932

SANYO CASSETTE PLAYER

1979, £Offers. Full auto reverse. Model FT960LE. Old stock. Mint in box with fittings. LW/MW/FM. New. Essex. 07708 450681 (RB)

SHEEPSKIN FLYING JACKET



£POA. Brown leather. Size: medium. Very good condition. London. 020 8534 1761 / Mob: 07401 783580 (PB)

TRANSPORTER TRAILER

£1,200. Twin axle. 16ft x 6ft bed. Brakes (new) and two new tyres. Ramps, winch (manual), lights. Also hitch attachment to take caravans. £500 hitch. Probably needs paint (surface rust). Derbyshire. 07454 948711 (PB)

TROLLEY JACK

£100. Long Chassis-High Lift 850mm. 1 Year Old very little use. North Lincs. 01652 658715 (JW)

TUY 583

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"VIXAN" PRIVATE PLATE



£15,000. On retention for immediate transfer. 07977 983002 (JW)

VARIOUS

£Various. 0-1 Morris 8, Wright, old model in case. Micrometer A58, now £30 plus p&p. 0-25mm micrometer, carbide face, £15 plus p&p. Surrey. 020 8641 4238 (RB)

WHEEL HUBCAPS

£35 ono + postage. 5 chrome aluminium 12in, in fair condition. Could do with black re-painted. To fit 12in wheels. Suffolk. 01440 760966 (RB)

WORKSHOP MANUALS

£POA. Genuine, for Jaguar Mk10, 2.4, 3.4, 4.20 and Daimler Conquest with parts catalogue £20 each. Also Triumph Vittese and MG Marmette £10 each. North Yorks. 01765 635064

X746 ARY

£975. Reg number on retention. Reads X74 GARY. Cambridge. 07774 614705 / 01954 267000 (RB)

WANTED

MGB ROADSTER

Wanted. In any condition with or without MoT. Must be chrome bumper model. Cash waiting. West Midlands. 07581 332598 (PB)

MGTD MKII

1953, Wanted. Speedometer or just the interior workings (gearing etc). Staffordshire. 07815 055836 (PB)

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MG B Roadster, 1978, Midnight Blue. Chrome Bumper MGB, Total body restoration completed May 2014. New chromework, black leather, black double duck hood, Minilite style alloy wheels. **£11,500**



MG B Roadster - LHD 1973, British Racing Green, Overdrive, Wire wheels, Leather Body restoration completed August 2014. Reconditioned unleaded engine. Black with Green piped leather interior, New hood, chrome work & chrome wire wheels **£11,500**



MG B Roadster, 1964, Tartan Red, Overdrive, Restored bodywork, Leather with Red Piping interior, Total body restoration 2010, rust free, new leather seats, mohair hood. **£11,500**



MG B Roadster, 1965, British Racing Green, O/D. Body work restored by us 5 years ago, excellent condition, new carpet, new Mohair hood, Black with White piped leather seats, new chrome wire wheels. **£10,500**



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MG B GT Mk1, 1967 Tartan Red, O/D, Wire wheels, Webasto s/roof, Leather. Restored bodywork, Red with Black piped leather interior, Red carpets in excellent condition, very clean engine compartment. **£7,500**



MG B GT, 1972, Black, Overdrive. Complete bare body, bare metal respray completed January 2014. New windscreen, all rubbers replaced, Black leather interior, Reconditioned unleaded engine, New wire wheels. Immaculate paintwork. **£7,500**



MG B GT, 1971, Tartan Red, Overdrive, Wire wheels. Body restored 2012 with photographic record, Stunning paintwork, Service history and invoices dating back 25 years, approx. 20k miles since recon engine and gearbox with overdrive. Black/red piped interior. **£7,500**



MG Midget Mk 3 1275cc, 1971, Teal Blue, Heritage Shell Rebuild. Totally rebuilt using a new Heritage Bodyshell completed approximately 10 years ago, still in rust free condition, Engine and gearbox rebuilt at that time **£7,500**



MG B GT, 1972, Black, O/D, Alloy wheels, Sebring Look. "De-bumpered" and fitted with a Sebring rear end, front spoiler, Bonnet power bulge, 1.5inch Minilite style alloy wheels with 195/60 tyres. Standard 1800cc engine with Overdrive gearbox. **£7,000**



MG B GT, 1972, British Racing Green, O/D, Leather interior. Body restored in 2007 with photo record, Paintwork unmarked & rustfree. Grey leather seats, Minilite style alloy wheels, Reconditioned Overdrive Gearbox & new clutch just fitted. **£6,500**

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MG unveil their facelifted MG6 and announce changes to the model line-up

Ex-Works MGB

John Yea of British Motor Heritage is given DRX 255C and sent racing

BTCC Begins

Andrew Jordan and Jack Goff kick off MG's assault on the 2015 BTCC

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(contents may be subject to change)

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Still welcome at Le Mans

50 years after MGB's swan song, Abingdon's old warhorse is still welcome at Le Mans as historic cars rekindle memories of unique finishing record at La Sarthe

Half a century ago this June, Paddy Hopkirk and the late Andrew Hedges drove the MGB to its third successive finish in the Le Mans 24 Hours. This would be another achievement for what was essentially a production sports car, albeit tuned for endurance racing with the Syd Enever designed 'long-nose', but anyone looking at the cockpit would have noted that it was close to showroom stock, even including carpets. Little wonder that so many MG followers associated with these Works MGBs, because anyone could modify their car to the same standard via Special Tuning.

These MGB Le Mans forays proved, as did outings at Sebring and later the Marathon de la Route, just how rugged and dependable Abingdon's unsung hero was. And still is, for the venerable MGB has proved one of the most popular choices for historic endurance racing, more than one competitor being on record as saying that once the car is prepared, that is it for an entire season. Organisers of the Le Mans Historic Meeting know they will never have any shortage of historic MGBs and whenever the support race before the 24 Hours caters for its period, the 1965 entry is always welcome.

Le Mans has always worked its magic for me, none more so than ten years ago when the MG Lola EX264 defied seemingly impossible odds and a raft of misfortunes to take victory in the LM P2 class. Its drivers were Mike Newton (CEO of the AD Group who had entered the car), Warren Hughes (the former MG Works driver who had raced the original MG EX257 from which the car had been developed) and the UK-based Brazilian

Thomas Erdos. Running the team was RML, whose Le Mans record is second to none and whose mechanics and race engineers are legendary. It was the happiest and most friendly team I have ever been associated with and the emotion of the podium presentation is something I will never forget. How ironic that in 2005 it was a pyrrhic victory. So, come mid-June I will raise a glass to Le Mans memories and absent friends.



Still active in historic endurance racing in the hands of Barry Siderly-Smith is the 1965 Le Mans MGB that finished strongly in its final Works appearance at La Sarthe half a century ago.

Turning back the Brooklands clock

VSCC Premier Cru Racing is set to reprise classic duels and atmosphere for historic MG race cars

Sometimes the old adage 'Less is More' becomes entirely apposite in an increasingly complex world. Take the world of historic motorsport as an example. Once there were a mere handful of events, but today you could fill your entire season's diary with worldwide extravaganzas if you had the time and funding. Sometimes it all seems too much. Naturally, the headline events like the Goodwood Revival, Laguna

Seca and Monaco Historic attract the highest profile fields, but for every car selected, there are others with equally significant provenance that never appear.

That may be about to change, for the Vintage Sports Car Club have announced Premier Cru Racing, which will be an exclusive new series of races catering for original pre-war racing cars. This was an era of famous marques like Bugatti, ERA, Alfa Romeo and Maserati, culminating in the Silver Arrows of Auto Union and Mercedes-Benz. Arguably this was a time when motor racing was still viewed as a sport, decades away from the sponsorship of late post-war years, and cars raced in their national colours of British Racing Green, Italian Red, French Blue and latterly German Silver. Much as it is fashionably popular to decry the Brooklands epithet of 'The Right Crowd and No Crowding,' the fact remains that this was a less frenetic time with a more relaxed atmosphere, even though the racing was highly competitive.

Pre-War Maserati experts and regular historic competitors Sean and Laura Danaher are behind this innovative approach and following successful independent appearances, made the decision to put it on a firmer footing. Hence

the new VSCC series which will run at three 2015 meetings, starting at the Silverstone Spring Start. Oulton Park and Snetterton will also host rounds and at each circuit there will be dedicated garage and paddock areas where cars and drivers will be together. Friendliness and informality will be the theme, as anyone who has experienced Historic Grand Prix Cars Association participation will immediately recognize.

Amongst the fields that will surely include Bugatti T35, Alfa Romeo Monza, ERA and Maserati 8CM, where might that leave Austin with its twin overhead camshaft supercharged single-seaters that were in essence scaled down Grand Prix cars? Or MG, with such cars as the Parnell single seater K3, the Q-Type or the R-Type that brought highly advanced technology on its introduction? The good news for those of us wanting to see such models with their contemporary rivals is that they will be welcome in the Premier Cru Racing series. The opportunity to see such cars in the unique atmosphere of a VSCC race meeting, competing against opposition that has not been over-modified – a key element of the new series – will emphasise their historic provenance and add a new and different perspective to the season.



The MG R-Type single seater, with its familiar outer lean, could well be a competitor in the new VSCC Premier Cru Racing series.

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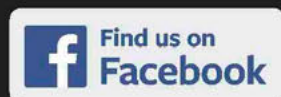
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